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THE CENTURY BIBLE

HEBREWS

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THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

HEBREWS

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INTRODUCTION

LIKE the First Epistle of John, but unlike any other New Testament epistle, this letter tells us neither its author's name nor the destination to which it was sent. We have therefore no problem of authenticity to face, for no claim to authorship is made. But all the more difficult are the questions that arise touching the writer and his readers. Their solution may be beyond our reach; it is none the less a duty to examine the conditions of the problem which any solution must satisfy, and thus narrow as far as may be the licence of conjecture. We may do this best by working inward towards the centre, beginning at the outer edge with the witness of antiquity, studying next the characteristics of the letter for the light they shed on the objects of our search, and lastly attempting an estimate of the answers that have been proposed.

I. THE EPISTLE IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

The first evidence we have for the existence of the Epistle is unusually early. In a letter sent by the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth, commonly known as the First Epistle of Clement, and written about A. D. 95,

sentences from the Epistle are quoted, though with no mention of the author's name, or indeed any indication that a quotation is being made. In chap. xxxvi. the author, speaking of Christ, says: 'Who being the radiance of his majesty, is by so much better than the angels as he hath inherited a more excellent name. For it is written, Who maketh his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire.' The passage continues with clear reference to Heb. i. 5, 13. The fact that Clement tacitly appropriates the words, with no allusion to the source from which he has drawn them, stands in significant contrast to his usual practice. Apart from these passages there are reminiscences of the Epistle in chap. xvii, and Jesus is several times referred to as our High Priest. The Epistle was therefore known and used in the Roman Church before the close of the first century A. D. It may have been known to Hermas, though the proofs of dependence are not cogent, for he, too, belonged to the Church of Rome. His date is fixed either about A.D. 100, or later, while Pius was bishop of Rome (A. D. 140–155). But no trace of it can be discovered in any other Christian writer till we come to Justin Martyr. His residence in Rome makes his use of it not unlikely, though the coincidences with it that he presents may be due rather to its influence on religious thought and phraseology than to direct borrowing from it. The apostolic fathers and the apologists, with the exceptions named, betray no acquaintance with it. The great Gnostics, so far as we know, made no use of it. Marcion did not include it in his canon, which consisted of a mutilated gospel of Luke, and the Pauline epistles (with the exception of Timothy and Titus), which he edited into conformity with his views. It follows from this, at least, that if he knew the Epistle he did not regard it as Paul's. It is omitted in the Muratorian Canon, which was compiled in the West about the close of the second century. This may be due to a gap in the list, which has been imperfectly preserved, but more

probably to the fact that, if the author knew it, he did not count it canonical. It is most important that Irenæus nowhere uses it in his great work against heresies, written probably shortly after A. D. 180, though he uses all the epistles attributed to Paul, with the unimportant exception of Philemon. He is said by Eusebius to have quoted it in a volume which we no longer possess. He plainly did not regard it as Paul's. His evidence is important, for he represents the traditions of the churches in Asia Minor, Rome, and Gaul. His pupil Hippolytus, who lived in Rome in the early part of the third century, while he quotes the Epistle is said to have denied its Pauline authorship. His contemporary, Caius of Rome, Eusebius tells us, 'mentions only thirteen epistles of the holy apostle, not counting that to the Hebrews with the others.' The historian adds that down to his own time some of the Romans did not regard it as a work of the apostle. In fact this remained true of Rome and the Western Church generally for a considerable period after the time of Eusebius.

In Northern Africa we find the Epistle assigned to a definite author. Tertullian in one of his latest works, a treatise on Modesty, written probably towards the year A. D. 220, makes a famous reference to it. After quoting the testimonies of the apostles, he says that he will add the testimony of a companion of the apostles: 'For there is extant a work of Barnabas inscribed to the Hebrews, a man of such authority that Paul has placed him beside himself in the career of abstinence.' He goes on to say that the Epistle of Barnabas is more generally received among the churches than the Shepherd of Hermas. That he means our Epistle, and not the work which is commonly known as the Epistle of Barnabas, is clear from the fact that he quotes Heb. vi. 1, 4–6, in favour of the Montanist doctrine that a second repentance was impossible. We may confidently infer that he had no suspicion that the letter was attributed by some to Paul.

Its doctrine was congenial to his views, but he cannot place it on a level with the apostolic writings. Further, he speaks with no sign of misgiving as to Barnabas' authorship, and therefore is not putting forward a conjecture of his own. Apparently he does not anticipate contradiction, though it is difficult to judge how widely diffused the opinion was. It may have come to Carthage from the Montanists of Asia Minor. It is remarkable that Cyprian, who was bishop of Carthage (A. D. 248–258) and a devoted student of Tertullian, makes no use of the Epistle and practically denies its Pauline authorship, in spite of the prominence in it of the idea of priesthood, in which he was specially interested. Nor did his contemporary Novatian appeal to the Epistle in support of his doctrine that no second repentance was possible.

In Alexandria we find the Pauline authorship asserted. Here was the famous catechetical school, over which Pantænus, Clement, and Origen successively presided. It is probable that Clement has preserved an opinion of Pantænus on the subject, though possibly 'the blessed presbyter' to whom he refers may be some one otherwise unknown. This opinion is to the effect that Paul's name is not attached to the Epistle from modesty, since he was an apostle to the Gentiles, whereas the Lord as the Apostle of the Almighty was sent to the Hebrews. Clement himself says that the Epistle is Paul's, but was written in Hebrew, and translated into Greek by Luke, hence its similarity in style to the Acts. Paul did not prefix his name because the Hebrews were prejudiced against him. This reason, it may at once be said, is not only absurd—as if the church would receive an anonymous letter or the bearer fail to communicate the author's name—but inconsistent with the language of the Epistle, which proves that the author was well known to the readers. 'The blessed presbyter' deals only with the absence of the author's name, but the fact to which he refers would more legitimately be pressed against the Pauline

authorship. The guesswork of the explanations raises the question how far the ascription of authorship was due to guesswork. It is true that the passages suggest that the Pauline authorship was the fixed point of departure, and that Pantænus and Clement alike are explaining difficulties that had been felt with respect to it. The explanations seem to have no tradition behind them, but the same cannot so confidently be said of the assertion of Pauline authorship. Yet this does not carry us far. We have no evidence for the connexion of Pantænus with the catechetical school before A. D. 180. It is further to be remarked that Origen speaks of 'the ancient men' as having handed down the Epistle as Paul's. It is difficult to estimate the sense of this vague phrase; if, as is probable, his Homilies on the Epistle are as late as A.D. 240, it may not imply a tradition much older than Pantænus. And on the other hand it should be said that Origen's words, 'If then any church holds this Epistle to be Paul's, let it be well accounted of for doing so,' favour the view that there was no such tradition in the *church* of Alexandria, but only in the catechetical school. Origen's own discussion is far more valuable than that of his predecessors. He observes that the style is more classical than Paul's, while the thoughts are wonderful and not inferior to those of the apostle. His solution is that the thoughts are Paul's, but the actual composition is due to some one who recorded Paul's teaching from memory and, so to speak, annotated it. Who this may be God only knows, but tradition mentions Clement of Rome and Luke. From this we may infer that the Alexandrians had merely an uncertain tradition as to the immediate author of the work in its present form, and that Origen's view that it was only indirectly Paul's was not his own suggestion. Further, there is a significant difference between his statement as to the impression made by the thoughts of the Epistle and the view he actually takes of them. The thoughts impress him as wonderful and

not inferior to those of Paul. In other words, they do not impress him as Paul's thoughts, but as thoughts equal to the apostle's. We may then infer that his conclusion rests on the tradition of Pauline origin, not on the Pauline stamp of the teaching. Had he not been bound by tradition he would probably have emancipated himself from the opinion that Paul had anything whatever to do with the Epistle. He usually cites it as Paul's, and includes it as one of the fourteen written by him. It may also be noticed that the Syrian churches seem to have regarded it as in some sense Paul's. It is included in their canon as embodied in the Peshitta, or Syriac version of the Bible. Unfortunately we do not know the date at which the New Testament was translated, and some place it in the first half of the second century, but others towards its close. It is added at the end of the Pauline epistles, after the private letters, with some consciousness, it would seem, that it stood on a different footing. Perhaps it was translated by another hand. Zahn thinks that the Theodotians in Rome (about A. D. 170) also looked on it as Paul's. By the fourth century the Pauline authorship was generally accepted in the Eastern Church, without the limitations laid down by Origen, but in the Western it was more usually rejected, till Augustine and Jerome, while dubious of it, were induced by deference to the East to treat it as Paul's, and through their example Western Christendom acquiesced in uncritical acceptance.

II. The Community: its History and Character.

The readers, like the author, had not received their Christianity from Christ himself, but from immediate disciples of his, whose message had been attested by signs and wonders (ii. 3, 4). Their conversion had not been superficial. They had been enlightened and tasted of the

heavenly gift, had been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, had tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come (vi. 4, 5, x. 32). They had received a knowledge of the truth and had been consecrated by the covenant blood (x. 26, 29). They had proved the genuineness of their Christian experience by the love they had shewn in ministering to the saints, and by their joyful endurance of sufferings and compassionate sharing in the lot of those who were persecuted (vi. 10, x. 32–34). They had passed soon after their conversion through a severe persecution, 'being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions,' and had suffered the spoiling of their possessions. They had had compassion on those in bonds; whether these belonged to this community, or, if so, were still members of it, is not clear. The community had been founded for a considerable period (v. 12) and still consisted for the most part of its original members, for those addressed are they who received the gospel from the ear-witnesses of Jesus, and had lived through the experiences described in x. 32–34. The readers do not therefore form a second generation of the community. They have lost their earlier leaders who had proclaimed the gospel to them (xiii. 7) and are bidden remember these, but no reference is made to an earlier generation, which had passed away. The author exhorts them to be worthy, not of their fathers, but of their own past. At the time he writes another persecution seems to have begun (xiii. 3, cf. verse 13). It has been inferred from the words, 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood,' that no martyrdoms had taken place, but the phrase is probably to be otherwise interpreted (see note on xii. 4). It is also clear that the community was pretty homogeneous in its composition. No reference is made to differences of race or view of Christianity, and the members are praised and blamed without distinction. They seem to have been Christians of the same standing and character (v. 12). It naturally follows from this that

the community was small. It might, therefore, be either a church in a city where Christians were not numerous, or a single congregation in a city where the church consisted of more congregations than one. It is more probable that in the case of so highly specialized a type of community we should adopt the latter rather than the former alternative, for even in a small city the whole church would be likely to present a more varied character. And there are certain indications in favour of this. In xiii. 17 the readers are enjoined to obey those who have the rule over them, but in verse 24 we read, 'Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.' The latter passage gains in force if all the rulers are tacitly contrasted with those of a special community, and the members of a single congregation are bidden salute the rulers and members of the whole church in the city. It is also not unlikely that Zahn is right in the view that 'not forsaking our own assembly' (x. 25) has reference, not to a desertion of Christian fellowship altogether, but to an abandonment of the congregation to which they belonged in order to attend the meetings of other Christian congregations in the same city. Their duty was to stay at their post and help the wavering (see note on x. 25). And on this view it is easiest to account for the loss of the address. If sent to the whole church of a city, the name would probably have been preserved; sent to a single congregation it was quickly forgotten. Further, the writer's relations with the community were close and intimate. He knows well its origin, history, and present condition, is acquainted with its leaders and endorses their work, and while an object of some suspicion to the readers (xiii. 18) entreats their prayers that he may be restored to them (verse 18). It is natural to infer from this that he was himself one of the leaders, though separated from them for a time.

The letter was called forth by an urgent peril. The author speaks of it as a 'word of exhortation.' Its chief

purpose was therefore practical, and the teaching is given less for its own sake than to influence conduct. The danger to which the readers were exposed was that of falling away from Christianity. So far, they still remain within the church, are 'holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling,' confess Jesus as Apostle and High Priest (iii. 1); they still show their love to God's name in ministering to the saints, and thus justify the author's belief in their ultimate salvation (vi. 9, 10); they are not of those who shrink back but of them that have faith (x. 39), and the writer can still earnestly desire their prayers (xiii. 18) and co-operation in the task of strengthening the weak and wavering (xii. 12, 13). But they were nevertheless in serious peril of falling away, so serious that the author, while he expects to see them soon, does not wait for this, but writes at once. The general nature of the danger may be gathered from the repeated warnings and exhortations of the letter. They must be on their guard against drifting away or neglecting the great salvation (ii. 1, 3), against unbelief and hardness of heart in falling away from the living God (iii. 8–13), or the disobedience which brought Israel to ruin in the wilderness. They are in danger of so falling away that renewal will be impossible, of ignominiously crucifying the Son of God afresh and counting unholy his covenant blood (vi. 6, x. 29), and of refusing to hear God's voice from heaven (xii. 25). The root of much of the mischief is intellectual stagnation. They were Christians of long standing and ought to have become teachers. But they were still infants in understanding, needing to be taught the rudiments over again (v. 11, 12). They were in danger of falling under the fascination of varied forms of teaching, foreign to Christianity, of which the author singles out a belief in the value of 'meats' (xiii. 9). And with intellectual error went a certain moral defect. There was a tendency to disaffection towards their present rulers (xiii. 17). They had not yet resisted sin in deadly earnest

(xii. 4, see note), they shrank from the decisive act which involved a full acceptance of the reproach of Christ (xiii. 13). While moral cowardice characterized the community as a whole, there were indications on the part of some of a lax chastity (xii. 16, xiii. 4), of avarice (xiii. 5), or a profane spirit, which preferred the temporal to the eternal (xii. 16). And as a natural outcome of these varied tendencies, love of the brethren was likely to grow cold (xiii. 1–3). The remedy is that they should 'hold fast' (iii. 6, 14, iv. 14, x. 23), cultivate patient endurance, of which they have great need (v. 12, x. 36, xii. 1), and that faith which gives assurance of the eternal and unseen (iv. 2, 3, vi. 12, x. 22, 39, xi, xiii. 7). To save themselves from drifting with the current, which sets away from the gospel, they must make a strenuous effort. They must give earnest heed to the message (ii. 1, iii. 12), give diligence to enter into the promised rest (iv. 11), press on to full growth (vi. 1), cast away all sluggishness (vi. 12), and stripping off every encumbrance run with patience the race set before them (xii. 1). They should imitate the saints of the Old Covenant, those heroes of faith who still stand in dense throngs round the course where they won their race (xii. 1); they should remember their former leaders and copy their faith (xiii. 7), but above all contemplate Jesus, the supreme example of faith and endurance (xii. 2, 3), and thus nerve themselves to endure the cross and despise the shame. They should seek to deepen their intellectual apprehension of Christianity, no longer remaining content with the elementary truths (v. 11–vi. 3). And as a safeguard against apostasy they must give themselves to practical Christianity (xiii. 1–3, 16), and loyally obey their leaders (xiii. 17).

While it is universally agreed that the readers were in danger of falling away from Christianity, opinion is sharply divided as to the precise form which apostasy was likely to take. Till recently the practically universal view has been that the letter was written to save them

from falling back into Judaism. This implies that the readers were born Jews, or at least that they had been Jewish proselytes before conversion to Christianity. This, however, is denied by a very influential minority of scholars (von Soden, Weizsäcker, Jülicher, Pfleiderer, Harnack, McGiffert, Moffatt), who hold either that the readers were Gentiles, or were addressed without any reference to nationality. These scholars think that their danger was a lapse into heathenism or irreligion. And the latter view is taken by some who regard the readers as born Jews (Zahn and G. Milligan).

The first question, therefore, is whether the readers were or were not Jews. The title 'To the Hebrews' does not settle it. It cannot be due to the author, for a letter sent to a particular community can hardly have had originally so general an address, though it may be pointed out that there was a synagogue of Hebrews in Rome. It may embody an inference from the nature of the Epistle, but it may also rest upon tradition as to the nationality of the readers. The term 'Hebrews' was not confined to Jews of Palestine; Paul, who belonged to Tarsus, was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and, as we see from the Gospel of John, Jews soon came to possess in the language of the church an anti-Christian significance. We have no evidence for the title earlier than Tertullian, and we cannot attach much weight to it. It must also be confessed that some of the passages quoted from the Epistle to prove the Jewish origin of the readers are capable of another explanation. Paul, in writing to Gentiles, could speak of the ancient Israelites as 'our fathers' (1 Cor. x. 1), of Abraham as 'our father' or 'our forefather according to the flesh' (Rom. iv. 1, 12), of Christians as 'the seed of Abraham' (Gal. iii. 29) or 'sons of Abraham' (Gal. iii. 7). The similar phrases in this Epistle may be so explained: but not so naturally, for the context, which speaks of physical descent, makes it highly probable that 'the seed of Abraham' in ii. 16

should be interpreted as Abraham's physical descendants. And if so, readers and writer are Jews to such a degree, that while not denying the universality of the gospel (ii. 9, 15, ix. 26–28), they instinctively think of it almost exclusively as it affects their own race. Thus the death of Christ is spoken of as 'for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first covenant' (ix. 15), that is, to atone for the sins of Israelites, and since in the preceding verse the author speaks of the blood of Christ as cleansing 'your [or our] conscience,' the readers seem to be reckoned as Israelites. This is also the most natural interpretation of 'the people' in xiii. 12. The new covenant in Jeremiah's prophecy is made with 'the house of Israel and the house of Judah' (viii. 8). The exhortation to go forth to Jesus without the camp (xiii. 13) can naturally mean nothing else than a complete break with Judaism. These arguments will be much strengthened by such as prove that the readers were in danger of a relapse into Judaism. But it is necessary to touch upon the reasons which have led to the view that they were Gentiles. Several are dealt with more fully in the course of the commentary. It is urged that the rudimentary doctrines enumerated in vi. 1, 2 were not such as a Jew, but such as a heathen would need to learn on becoming a Christian, since they were for the most part common to Judaism and Christianity, and did not in any case contain what was specifically Christian as opposed to Jewish. For the detailed discussion of this the notes may be consulted, but it may be said here that no doctrine can be the same in Christianity as it was in the Old Testament, and instruction on the doctrines in question would thus be specially needed by Jews who became Christians. And Harnack himself confesses that from this passage we cannot derive absolutely certain testimony for the Gentile character of the readers.

Several passages are supposed to prove that the readers were in danger of falling away into heathenism or

irreligion. The most important is the phrase 'falling away from the living God' (iii. 12), which is said not to suit apostasy to Judaism (but see note). Others are 'if we sin wilfully,' 'to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin,' 'an evil heart of unbelief.' But why a lapse into Judaism, which involved the rejection of Christ, should not be characterized in such terms is what is really unintelligible. The expressions of vi. 6 and x. 29 are even stronger, but much fitter to describe apostates to Judaism, with its virulent hate of the Messiah it had crucified, than those who had relapsed into heathenism. Nor is it clear why the comparison with the Israelites in the wilderness should not suit those who fell back into Judaism. A lack of faith was precisely the fault of both. The case of Esau is not necessarily to be applied to the readers generally, but his 'profanity' was essentially the absence of faith. The references to the Law as spoken by angels and enforced by severe sanctions would only, it is affirmed, have misled Christians inclined to Judaism. But in face of the author's whole argument the readers would need to have been inconceivably 'dull of hearing,' if they had found in such references any encouragement to attach themselves to the Law. And it is in the argument as a whole that we must find the decisive proof that the readers were Jewish Christians in peril of falling back into Judaism. If we cannot see the wood for the trees, we may infer from various details the contrary opinion. But if the author had been confronted with a threatened apostasy to heathenism or surrender of religion altogether, is it conceivable that he should have constructed his argument as he has done? No attack on heathenism is to be discovered in the letter, no comparison between it and Christianity in the matter of truth or morality or capacity to satisfy the religious instinct. Instead of this we have an elaborate many-sided comparison between Judaism and Christianity, which would have been utterly irrelevant to the purpose the writer had in view. What

value would any proof that Christianity was superior to Judaism have to readers who were in danger of rejecting both alike? To them the discussion would have merely an academic interest. A writer of such ability and in such deadly earnest may surely be trusted to have fitted his argument to the practical conclusion he wished to reach. And this comes out very clearly in his use of the Old Testament. That Gentile Christians regarded the Old Testament Scriptures as authoritative, and therefore recognized the validity of proofs based upon them, is true but irrelevant. For it was just because they had become Christians that they accepted them, and since their belief in them was not independent of their Christianity, their testimony would be so far from strengthening their loyalty to Christ, that it would itself be one of the things belief in which needed to be confirmed. The writer never dreams that his readers will reject an appeal to the Old Testament, though he fears that they may reject Christ. Their temptation therefore must have left their belief in the Old Testament intact while it undermined their faith in Christianity. It can thus have been nothing else than a temptation to fall away into Judaism, for this, while it meant a break with Christianity, left the authority of the Jewish Scriptures as unimpaired, and therefore the arguments from the Old Testament as impressive as ever.

III. The Teaching of the Epistle.

The subject of the Epistle is 'the world to come' (ii. 5), and it is developed by an elaborate contrast with this present world. The world to come does not bear its name because it has yet to come into being. It already exists, and has existed from eternity. It is regarded as still to come, because as yet it has not been realized in time. Our world is but its copy, created in time and

destined in the imminent convulsion of heaven and earth to pass away. It is the earthly and material as contrasted with the heavenly and spiritual, the temporal and perishable as contrasted with the eternal and permanent. Two orders of things thus exist side by side, a higher and a lower, the pattern and the copy. But it is in the sphere of religion simply that the author works out the contrast. His starting-point is the lower order as instituted in the Law and its ritual. From the known he argues to the unknown. Moses had been commanded to make all things according to the pattern shewn him in the mount (ix. 5). This pattern was the true, original tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man (viii. 2), and since it was exactly copied in the material order, its form and internal arrangements could be inferred from those of the earthly tabernacle. Yet in the very fact that it belonged to the heavenly order, it was implied that it was not made with hands, was no tangible (xii. 18) or material structure. Its home was in the realm of ideas, as they live in the mind of God. This is not to say that it was a mere abstraction, a thought which lacked all reality till it was embodied in a material form. That would almost invert the true relation. The material is not the real, but its insubstantial shadow. No material imitation can give the actual image of the spiritual. It has no permanence; as it came, so it will perish in time. The ideal tabernacle is the truly real, since it is the spiritual and eternal, unfettered by the limitations of space or time, its inherent energies unsapped by the decay which exhausts the vitality of all earthly things. The main thesis of the author is that Christianity is superior to Judaism and is the perfect religion, because it belongs to the heavenly order, while Judaism belongs to the earthly and is stamped with its ineffectiveness.

The whole argument, we might almost say, falls under this contrast of material and spiritual, of temporal and eternal. It might seem inconsistent with this that the

author places in the forefront of his discussion the superiority of the Son to the angels. Do not the angels, then, belong to the spiritual and eternal order? It is true that they are the firstborn, enrolled in the city of God. Yet Jewish theology connected them closely with the material universe, so that each thing, even the most insignificant, had its angel. And the writer asserts that such tenure of personality as they may possess is so slight that God transforms them into impersonal natural forces (i. 7). While the universe, with which they are inseparably connected, passes away, the Son's throne is for ever and ever. The Law itself, which they gave (ii. 2), was ushered in with congenial exhibition of elemental phenomena (xii. 18–21), making the physical senses quail with intolerable fear. Its scene was a material mount, dissolving in flame, fenced from all access by physical bounds. Moses and Joshua were weak, mortal men, who at the best could give their followers an unquiet settlement in an earthly land, but could not lead them into the rest of God. And the whole religious apparatus of Judaism was of this physical character. Its priesthood was ever changing, for its priests were subject to death; its succession depended on physical descent, the qualifications or disqualifications for it were physical. It was subject to infirmity just because it was constituted by the law of a fleshen commandment. The tabernacle which it served was pitched by human hands and decked with a golden splendour, which made only the more glaring its spiritual indigence and moral inefficiency. Its sacrifices belonged wholly to the earthly order, the blood of animal victims could cleanse the flesh but not the conscience, the material sanctuary but not the things in the heavens; and thus the access it could give to God was a mere make-believe. The covenant thus dedicated and maintained by physical blood-sprinkling, since it could not take away sin, and thus could provide no real fellowship with God, failed as a religion and hence could have no permanence. Moving

wholly in the realm of the sensuous it could effect no spiritual result.

But Christianity is that heavenly original of which Judaism is the flickering and insubstantial shadow. Its revealer is no perishable angel, who lives only that he may serve, or ceases to live that as impersonal force he may serve the better. He is the eternal Son, Creator of the universe and Lord of the world to come. Radiance of the Divine glory and expression of the Divine essence he was the perfect revelation of God. Of heavenly origin, he could lead his followers into God's heavenly rest. As priest of the order of Melchizedek, with no beginning of days or end of life, his priesthood was unbroken by death. Nor did it rest on physical succession, but on personal worth. He offered no brute beast as his sacrifice, no irrational, unconscious victim. He, God's eternal Son, was himself the victim whom he offered, in loving sympathy for his brethren, in loyal obedience to the Father's will. The sacrifice of such a Person, offered in such a spirit, released the most potent spiritual energies. It opened a new and living way into the heavenly tabernacle, where he presented himself as priest and victim in one. He cleansed the heavenly sanctuary, removing the veil, which even in it separated the Holy Place from the Holiest of all and hid the face of God. Hence, while the Law was impotent to purge guilt away and bade the worshipper stand back, the blood of Christ cleansed the conscience and bade men draw nigh. So in the New Covenant, which he instituted, real communion with God first became possible and the hindrances to it on God's side and on man's were taken away. Thus Christianity proved itself to be the perfect religion, in that it perfectly satisfied the religious instinct for fellowship with God.

The two orders exist side by side and come into relation in the sphere of human life. Man himself belongs to both. He is a partaker of flesh and blood, subject to

infirmity and death; yet he is a son of the Father of spirits, and a brother of the eternal Son, who did not become his brother through the Incarnation, but became incarnate because he was already man's brother and recognized the claim of brotherhood. It is the competition of these antagonistic elements that creates the moral tragedy of man's career, and sets the speculative problem, which the author attempts to solve. As linked to the sensuous he is a victim of sin, as a son of God he seeks communion with his heavenly Father. But sin fills him with the consciousness of unfilial disobedience, which forbids this fellowship. A sensuous sacrifice cannot cleanse the conscience, it only aggravates the sense of sin by the constant reminder of what it is powerless to remove. It is thus man's misery that, poised between two worlds, he cannot heartily belong to either. If he is to achieve his destiny to be lord of the world to come, powers must stream forth from that world and redeem him. Even before the coming of Christ, gleams of the heavenly order burst through. But the light was shattered in separate rays and fitful flashes. The Law was a shadow cast into the world by the heavenly reality, but with none of the religious power of its original. After the long preparation in the religious history of Israel the crisis arrived. The Son moved with love for his brethren, and desirous of offering a sacrifice agreeable to the will of God, clothed himself in a human body and struck into the current of human life. He lived within the terms of this lower order, became lower than the angels who ruled it, and placed the veil of flesh between himself and the heavenly world. He accepted all the conditions of a truly human life, especially the moral discipline of temptation. Thus, Son though he was, he learnt through pain a human obedience, passing through the utmost strain of temptation, till he became perfect through suffering. For that he might help his brethren in their temptations, might be their leader and priestly representative before God, he

must gain a sympathy which not love itself, but only experience, could teach him. And yet while he had to share man's experience of temptation, it was necessary that sympathy should not be purchased at the cost of sin. Only the sinless conqueror of temptation could be the Captain of salvation, only the morally spotless victim could be an acceptable sacrifice to God. And this intensified the keenness of his trial, for with him it passed the point at which other wills, even the strongest, had snapped under the strain. When the last lesson had been learnt in victory over the tremendous recoil from all that the cross implied, he became the High Priest of man. His offering of himself on the cross was itself a high-priestly act, for though locally it took place on earth, where he could not be a priest, it really belonged in virtue of its character to the heavenly order, since earthly and heavenly are matters not of space and time but of intrinsic quality. In death he broke free from the lower order, rending the veil of flesh, and passing into the heavenly sanctuary he presented himself before God. Thus having borne the sins which stained men's conscience with the sense of guilt, he opened a path by which his fellows might enter into the immediate presence of their Father. But here the actual clashes with the ideal. Christians while on earth cast their anchor into the heavenly city, and are bound fast to it by the bond of hope. They are strangers and pilgrims, seeking a city and their fatherland. All things are not yet made subject to man ; those who are called have received the promise of the eternal inheritance, but still await its fulfilment. On the other hand, they have already come to the heavenly city, to God and the angels, to Jesus and the spirits of the righteous made perfect. This double point of view answers to the double position which the Christian holds, and the double life he leads, in eternity and in time. Actually he still lives within the lower order. But ideally he has already transcended it, and he confidently looks forward to the time when the

actual shall be one with the ideal. Yet this is not the whole truth. He need not wait till death rends the fleshen veil. 'We which have believed do enter into rest.' Faith has the power to translate us into the heavenly sanctuary, we may at any moment draw nigh and enjoy unrestricted communion with God.

The foregoing discussion will have served its purpose if it sets the reader at the right point of view. The detailed development of the argument and elucidation of special points must be sought in the commentary; reference may also be made to the discussion of the contrast between the writer's theology and that of Paul in the section on the Author.

IV. The Destination of the Epistle.

We have already seen that the Epistle was addressed to a Jewish Christian community, forming probably a single congregation in a large town. The members were Christians of long standing, and had received the gospel from ear-witnesses of Jesus, who were no longer with them. Although they had thus a second generation of teachers, they did not themselves belong to the second generation of the church, but to the first. They had passed through a severe persecution soon after their conversion, and another seems already to have begun.

It has been very commonly supposed that the letter was sent to the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem. There is much to make such a view plausible. The temptation to revert to Judaism would be felt there with peculiar force, especially as it became more and more clear that the Jewish people would not embrace Christianity. The ties of blood and earlier faith, the fascination of the temple ritual, which even as Christians they had not abandoned, the pressure of persecution, the keen reproach of apostasy and disloyalty to their race, must have tried their con-

stancy severely. To such a state of mind the Epistle was suited, with its proof that Christianity gave them actually that pardon of sin and fellowship with God which they falsely imagined they found in Judaism. But there are objections which seem to be fatal to this view. Among these we should not reckon the ministering to the saints, for which the readers had been conspicuous, since there is no ground to believe that 'the saints' are the poor Christians of Jerusalem, and the poverty of the Jerusalem church is no reason why they should not have shewn kindness to fellow Christians. Nor are the martyrdoms which had taken place in that church inconsistent with the statement of xii. 4, which probably has no reference to martyrdom at all. But the language of ii. 3 implies that the readers had not themselves heard Christ, but had been evangelized at a definite time by those who had heard him. This seems to suit no period of the Jerusalem church, in which many who had seen and heard the Lord must have still been living. The reply that a second generation of Christians is addressed has already been set aside. And at what definite period had such a second generation received enlightenment? Further, it is usually supposed that the author wished his readers to break decisively with the temple worship. It is true that he disparages the view that the heart can be established by meats, by which he probably means sacrificial meals (see note on xiii. 9). But his mode of speaking forcibly suggests that he is not addressing those whose immemorial practice had been to participate in the sacrificial ritual. It is also to be noticed that while he commends their former leaders, he would be counselling his readers to break with their tradition, for the leaders in Jerusalem had certainly kept up their connexion with the temple worship. The reference to meats must be explained by the fact that he is urging a decisive breach with Judaism, of which the sacrificial system was an integral and indeed the most prominent part. It is difficult to believe that Timothy,

Paul's trusted companion, should have had any influence at Jerusalem in stemming the tide which was likely to sweep the readers back to Judaism, or have been welcome in Jerusalem at all. Still more unlikely was it that a writer, who sustained such a relation to the church in Jerusalem as the author sustained to the church which he addresses, should have written to it in Greek rather than Aramaic, and based his arguments on the LXX. That he did so because he could not write Aramaic and could not read the Bible in Hebrew is probable. For it is certain that the Epistle was not written in Aramaic. This is shewn by its style, and probably by the use of *diathēkē* in the double sense of 'will' and 'covenant'; which would have been impossible in Aramaic as in English. But it is decisively proved by the Biblical quotations. These are made from the LXX as a rule, and that this is not due to a translator is clear from the fact that the author argues from the LXX even where it differs from the Hebrew. That a writer who could not speak Aramaic and who employed arguments which possessed no cogency for those who read the Bible in Hebrew should have enjoyed a position of such authority in the church at Jerusalem is hard to believe. Nor is the feeling of disappointment with the condition of the readers so natural in this case. The members of a church which had been the fountain-head of such missionary activity should hardly have been blamed that they had not yet become teachers. Nor was the development which the author thinks his readers should have achieved quite on the lines of what would have been expected from the conservative and fanatically Jewish church at Jerusalem. Some of the conditions would be better met by other cities in Palestine, but we have no reason for fixing on any, and some of the objections to Jerusalem would apply here as well. Cæsarea has been suggested, and the words 'they of Italy salute you' would suit a city so connected with Rome. The population was for the most part

Gentile, and the church was probably mixed. A special congregation of Jewish Christians may have existed there, but of this we know nothing. Others again have suggested a Syrian church, such as Antioch. This is possible, and after the rebuke of Peter by Paul the Jewish and Gentile sections of the church may have formed separate congregations, but this is unlikely. The Gentiles were probably in a majority.

Some have thought of Alexandria. It is in favour of this that the author, who seems to have belonged to the church to which he writes, exhibits an acquaintance with Alexandrian thought, such as could be most readily accounted for by the view that he was an Alexandrian. The city was also large enough to contain several congregations, some of which may have been exclusively Jewish. The argument that in his descriptions of the sanctuary, where he diverges from the arrangements of the temple at Jerusalem, the author is thinking of the Jewish temple at Leontopolis, near Alexandria, is valueless. It cannot be proved that the latter conformed any better than the former to the description of the Epistle. But if this could be made out it would prove nothing, for the author does not refer to the temple ritual at all, but to the tabernacle (see notes on ix. 4). Further, the tradition in Alexandria was that Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews in Palestine. Both parts of the tradition are probably incorrect, but it excludes the view that the letter was sent to Alexandria, unless there was a violent break in the continuity of the church, such as some scholars have assumed, our total ignorance of that church's early history affording ample room for conjecture.

Many scholars consider that it was addressed to Rome. It was a city in which Christianity had been long established, and which contained, of course, a large number of Jews. That the church was mainly composed of Gentiles is highly probable, though some eminent writers hold the contrary opinion. If so, the letter cannot have

been addressed to the whole church, but, as we have seen reason on other grounds to believe, to a special section of it, consisting of Jewish Christians. That in Rome there were three groups, meeting apparently in private houses, we learn from Rom. xvi. 5, 14, 15, if we can assume that this chapter was really sent to Rome and not to Ephesus. To such a house-church the letter might have been sent. The phrase 'they of Italy' (xiii. 24) on the whole favours this view. In itself it might mean (1) Christians of Italy but away from home who send greeting to a church in Italy, or (2) Christians in Italy who send greeting to a church out of Italy, or (3) Italian Christians out of Italy who send greeting to a church out of Italy in which they had some special interest. It is probable that the second of these alternatives should be set aside, for it is most unlikely that a greeting should be sent in so general a form. Greetings from a whole country are far less natural than from a particular place. A definite group of Italian Christians out of Italy is therefore intended. And as between (1) and (3) the former should probably be preferred. It is clear from the fact that this group is selected for special mention that there must have been some intimate relations between it and the readers. It is simplest to assume that these Italians are saluting fellow countrymen in Italy, though circumstances could readily be imagined which might be satisfied by (3). The phrase then rather strongly favours the Italian destination of the letter. If so, Rome is probably the only city which fulfils the conditions. It agrees with this that the Epistle was known to Clement of Rome at so early a period. This could be equally well explained on the theory that the author wrote from Rome, but we have seen that it is far more probable that 'they of Italy,' and therefore the author, were not in Italy. Timothy also had been brought into connexion with Rome through Paul's imprisonment. It might be argued that Timothy is more likely to have been imprisoned at Rome than

elsewhere, perhaps in connexion with Paul's martyrdom. But so precarious an argument cannot weigh against strong probabilities on the other side. The reference to the circumstances of the readers' conversion (ii. 3) is not incompatible with the view that they were Roman Christians. We know nothing as to the origin of the church. If founded by Roman Jews converted in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost the language of ii. 3, 4 might gain in meaning. The mention of their persecutions raises a difficulty. According to several, the earlier persecution (x. 32–34) was that under Nero, while the later, from which they were suffering at the time, was that under Domitian. This would not suit the general history of the church of Rome, for the earlier persecution is placed soon after the conversion of the readers (x. 32), whereas the church had become famous some time before (Rom. i. 8). It might, however, suit the history of a special congregation. But it is difficult to believe that x. 32–34 refers to the Neronian persecution. 'Made a gazingstock' admirably describes the martyrdom of Christians under Nero, but it can hardly be used of them here, for it is applied to the case of the readers, who had not been martyred at all (see note on the passage). It is more likely that the reference is to the disturbances between Jews and Christians in the time of Claudius which resulted, about A. D. 50, in an edict of banishment, by which Aquila and Priscilla among others were expelled from Rome (Acts xviii. 2). We do not, however, escape difficulties by this solution. Paul was probably dead at the time the letter was written, for we know of no imprisonment of Timothy in his lifetime, and while he was living Timothy was under his direction. Nor had Timothy any connexion with Rome till Paul's imprisonment there. Again, the persecution under Nero seems from the language of the Epistle (e. g. xiii. 3) not to have burst in all its fury. If written to Rome, then it would seem that we should date the Epistle between the death of Paul and

the Neronian persecution. This involves, what is on other grounds probable, that the imprisonment of Paul recorded in Acts was terminated by execution rather than release followed by martyrdom in Nero's persecution. This combination is not free from difficulties, but perhaps it satisfies the conditions as well as anything that has been proposed.

V. The Author.

Nothing is so certain with respect to the authorship as the negative conclusion that it was not written by Paul. This is proved by a number of independent lines of argument, any one of which would suffice to make his authorship improbable, while some are quite inconsistent with it. Tradition can hardly be said to favour it. Rome supplies us with the earliest evidence for the existence of the Epistle, but gives no author's name, and for centuries with the whole Western Church refused to recognize it as Paul's. That Alexandria had a tradition of Pauline origin, and similarly Syria, is more than neutralized by the silence or positive denial of Rome, combined with the ascription to Barnabas in North Africa. It was natural enough to assume the Pauline authorship of an elaborate argument against Judaism, and this tendency was confirmed by the mention of Timothy and the false but old reading 'my bonds' in x. 34. It would also be strengthened by the growing disposition to insist on apostolic authorship, direct or indirect, as indispensable for canonicity. It may be added that if the view that it was sent to Rome is correct, that alone disproves its Pauline authorship. The internal evidence is even more decisive. Paul was accustomed to authenticate his Epistles with his name and autograph salutation (2 Thess. ii. 17). The evidence of style can hardly be exhibited without reference to the original. But it is so strong that even Clement and Origen, who inherited the

belief that Paul wrote it, were driven to the conclusion that it could not have come from his hand in its present form. The Greek is purer and more idiomatic than Paul's, and the author, if incapable of Paul's most soaring flights, sustains a higher level of eloquence. He is a less emotional and impulsive writer, and is not constantly diverted by new thoughts from the plan he has carefully sketched. His argument is developed in calm and stately manner, which may be readily followed by readers who would be baffled by Paul's rapid and difficult dialectic and crowded, tumultuous thoughts. He is a slow but massive thinker, who builds up a solid argument, but with little of that nervous energy, intellectual keenness, and passion for ideas which made Paul one of the most powerful and brilliant dialecticians the world has ever known. The well-known account of the contests of wit between Ben Johnson and Shakespeare at the Mermaid illustrates precisely the difference between the author and Paul. One of the best tests of style is presented by the logical particles, since a writer uses these almost unconsciously, and in argument such particles must be used freely. Several of those which are often used by Paul are never used by the writer, except in quotations. Similarly other particles several times used by the author are never employed by Paul. There are also striking differences in the general vocabulary. The writer differs from Paul in the formula with which he introduces scriptural quotations. With a single exception (ii. 6) the human author is nowhere referred to (this is true even of iv. 7). All utterances of Scripture are assigned to God or the Holy Ghost, or the Son. Paul mentions the human author (e. g. Rom. iv. 6, ix. 27, x. 19, 20). But his more frequent formula of citation is 'As it is written,' which occurs thirteen times in Romans alone, or 'It is written,' which occurs nine times in his Epistles. In a work so full of quotations as the Epistle to the Hebrews it is significant that neither occurs once. Again, while both writers use

the LXX, Paul seems to have used a different text from that employed in the Epistle. And while the former could correct it by the Hebrew, which he employed in a freer way, the author cannot go behind the LXX to the original. The structure of the Epistle also differs from that of similar Epistles by Paul. In the former the argument is continually interrupted by exhortation, in the latter we have the doctrinal portion of the Epistle followed by the hortatory. The difference in theology alone is sufficient to stamp the Epistle as non-Pauline. This is true not only of the detailed doctrine but of the general point of view. Paul had been trained as a Rabbi and a Pharisee, righteousness before God was to him a matter of life and death. His efforts to win it through the Law had been an utter failure, and his conversion was the radical negation of all his Pharisaic ideals. And thus his theology was developed in a series of antitheses, given by his experience as Pharisee and Christian. Flesh and spirit, sin and righteousness, law and grace, works and faith, Adam and Christ, such were its watchwords. The whole legal dispensation was one of condemnation and death, casting on the lives of men the shadow of its curse. For while holy in itself, it acted on the flesh as an irritant, bringing out the worst of a man, selling him in hopeless slavery to sin. So tremendous had been Paul's revulsion from his old belief that he roundly denies that the Law had ever been meant to bring righteousness. No, it came in between the promise and the fulfilment, a necessary interloper, for man must be trained by hard discipline for freedom and the sense of sin must be deepened, but an interloper none the less. In Jesus the promise, so long obstructed by the ungracious Law, came to its own. In his death the race of man, which had sinned in Adam, died with him to its guilty past, the Law was abolished by the endurance of its penalty, its curse cancelled by the accursed death of the cross, and sin, with the flesh, its home, condemned and crucified. And as the race died in

Jesus, so it rose in him to a new life. When the sinner, feeling the burden of sin and the intolerable yoke of the Law, casting away all thought of merit, believes on Christ, then the great racial experience of Calvary becomes his own. For faith makes him one with Christ, and thus he dies to the old life and, one spirit with Christ, stands righteous before God. And since Christ has become the inmost kernel of his personality, he lives that holy life in the spirit, which lies beyond the reach of his old tyrants, sin, flesh, and the Law. Thus in joyous freedom, unfretted by the yoke of the Law, the spirit soars spontaneously into its native heaven, and dwells with Christ at the right hand of God. Since the Law is done away, and neither works nor privilege, but faith alone, avail before God, all national barriers are broken and the Gentile placed on an equal footing with the Jew. When we turn from this to our Epistle the contrast is striking, and all the more so for such agreement as the two systems present. For the difference is between the moulds into which they have been cast. The two men have construed Christianity from wholly different points of view. In Hebrews the Pauline antitheses disappear, and in their place we have the two ages, pattern and copy, substance and shadow, Christ and the angels, the priest after the order of Melchizedek and the priest after the order of Aaron, the heavenly and earthly tabernacles, the blood of Christ and the blood of bulls and goats. In both writers the Law is weak, but in Paul it is weak through the flesh, in Hebrews weak because it is a mere copy and shadow. And while for Paul the Law is almost exclusively the moral Law, and especially the Ten Commandments, for our author the Law is chiefly ritual and sacrificial, and his typology is controlled by the regulations for the Day of Atonement. Both hold that the Law has passed away through the work of Christ. But Paul regarded it as the strength of sin for those who were under it and therefore its abolition was needed in the interests of morality, while

Christ by his death and Christians by union with him had escaped into the freedom of the spirit, where the law of the spirit could alone hold sway. Our author taught that the Law was done away because the Levitical priesthood was superseded by that of the order of Melchizedek, and also because Christ had done what the Law through long ages had vainly striven to do. Both regard the work of Christ as effecting atonement. But Hebrews says nothing of it as vindicating God from the suspicion of conniving at sin, of redemption from the curse of the Law, of a death to sin, or a condemnation of sin in the flesh. While with Paul the resurrection is as important in Christ's work as the death, in Hebrews it has no theological importance at all. Nor could it hold any in a system based on the ritual of the Day of Atonement. In such a system, while the death was necessary, the climax of the redeeming act consisted in Christ's presentation of himself to God in the heavenly Holy of Holies, a thought which has no parallel in Paul. The differences as to the appropriation of salvation are perhaps even more radical. With Paul everything is included in union with the crucified and risen Lord, and participation in his experiences. This is the very heart of the Pauline theology, but not a trace of it is to be found in Hebrews. Christ is our Brother, who owns the ties of kinship, our Captain or Forerunner, who dedicates the way to the Holiest by his blood, by which we may follow him. He is our High Priest who offers himself to God for us, and cleanses our conscience by the sprinkling of his blood. But never do we read that he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, or hear any echo of Paul's immortal words, 'I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me.' And from this more external conception of Christ's relation to us, we must explain the stress laid upon his earthly life. Through its experiences he gained the sympathy which enables him to help us in temptation. Such a conception, however valuable to

Paul as a practical religious teacher, could have no place in an idealistic theology which counted the believer 'dead to sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus.' It is natural also that their conceptions of faith should differ. To Paul faith is the act of trust in the work of Christ, which makes the believer one with him. In Hebrews it is a confident assurance of the future, by which it is realized as present. Even in the Christology, where the two writers approach each other most nearly, it is remarkable that the author of Hebrews uses the names of Christ so differently. Most striking of all is the absence of the name 'Christ Jesus,' which occurs about ninety times in Paul's Epistles, including twenty-six instances in the Pastoral Epistles. These differences not only preclude Pauline authorship; they shew conclusively that Paul can have had nothing to do with the Epistle directly or indirectly. It is in no sense a Pauline Epistle, and only in the loosest sense could it be spoken of as Pauline in theology. Paul could never have written an epistle in which, while salvation was regarded as universal, it should be habitually spoken of as if it concerned only the Jews. The author of the Epistle was a man whose whole mental build and outlook were other than Paul's. Lastly, most scholars have rightly felt that the way in which he speaks of himself, as deriving his knowledge from disciples of the Lord (ii. 3), is entirely inconsistent with the view that Paul, who passionately protested that he had not received his Gospel from man, was its author.

A stronger case can be made out for Barnabas, for whom we have the tradition of North Africa and perhaps of Asia Minor. If the Epistle was sent to Jerusalem, which has been shewn to be very improbable, he is the only member of the Pauline circle known to us, with the possible exception of Silas, who could be reasonably supposed to have sufficient authority, or even acceptance with the Christians of Jerusalem, to send them such a letter. Even so, it would be difficult to explain the language of

xiii. 19, which implies that the author belonged to the community he is addressing, and is temporarily separated from it. According to the compact made with the pillar apostles, Paul and Barnabas received the Gentile mission as their province (Gal. ii. 9). If the letter went to Rome it is unlikely that Barnabas wrote it, for we have no reason to suppose that he was ever in Rome. It is possible, though perhaps not probable, that Barnabas was not a hearer of Jesus. In Cyprus he may conceivably have gained such Alexandrian culture as was possessed by the author. No argument can be based on the improbability that a Levite should have made mistakes as to the ritual and arrangements of the tabernacle. But it is strange that a Levite, who had lived in Jerusalem, should ignore the temple so completely, and base his argument altogether on the Laws as to the tabernacle and its services. There is also the difficulty caused by the disappearance of the name from tradition. It may, of course, be fairly argued that tradition, which ascribes to him now this epistle, and now the so-called Epistle of Barnabas, is best accounted for, if he was the author of one of them; and since the latter alternative is improbable, the former should be accepted. It is however possible that the ascription to Barnabas of our Epistle was due to confusion with the other. And this would be helped by the description of the letter as a 'word of exhortation,' which might naturally be attributed to the 'Son of exhortation' (Acts iv. 36). Besides, the reference to Timothy and other passages suggest that the author was rather a junior than a senior member of the Pauline circle.

The other names mentioned in tradition, Luke and Clement of Rome, may be set aside. That there are coincidences in language between Luke and the Epistle is true. But partly these are due to the literary education of the authors, partly to the use by Luke of sources which present strong affinities to the Epistle. What seems decisive is the fact that Luke was a Gentile (Col. iv. 14

compared with verse 11; see also note on v. 7). Clement was certainly a man of mental calibre far inferior to that of the author. It is simply his quotations from the Epistle which suggested his authorship.

Silas has better claims to be considered, though there is little more to be said for him, except on the hypothesis of the Jerusalem destination, than that he was a Jewish Christian and a friend of Timothy, and that the striking coincidences between 1 Peter and Hebrews might be more easily explained if the latter were written by one who assisted in the composition of the former. But this is a very precarious argument, for it is uncertain on which side the dependence lies. We should have expected a missionary companion of Paul to exhibit more traces of Paul's influence. Further, he is not mentioned by tradition.

This is also true of Apollos, whose name, it would appear, was first suggested by Luther. Apart from this he suits the conditions better than those already named. He was an Alexandrian Jew, mighty in the Scriptures, who powerfully confuted the Jews, and was an eloquent speaker. The author of the Epistle was certainly familiar with the Alexandrian philosophy. The coincidences with Philo and the Book of Wisdom are too numerous to be accidental, and the fundamental conception of the two ages is derived from the Alexandrian doctrine of the world of ideas and the world of phenomena. The differences between Philo and the Epistle are naturally accounted for by the change that must come when an abstract philosophy of ideas is charged with the rich content of the Christian facts. The relation to the Pauline circle, combined with the marked divergence from the Pauline type of theology, is well accounted for by the personal friendship of Apollos with Paul and Timothy, combined with the independence in his presentation of the gospel. Yet we should hardly have expected Apollos to have received Christianity from the ear-witnesses of the

Lord. If he had been the author, we should have expected Clement in writing to the Corinthians, in a letter which alludes to the partisans of Paul, Cephas, and Apollos, to have mentioned him as the author when he quoted his letter. And if the letter was sent to Rome, we have no evidence that Apollos was connected with that church.

Mr. Welch has recently suggested Peter. His chief ground is a correspondence he has detected between ii. 3 and John i. 35–42. Probably very few scholars will be able to see any connexion between the two (see note on ii. 3). The coincidences between the Epistle and 1 Peter are pressed in favour of the conclusion. These may be freely admitted, but there are striking differences, and it is notoriously unsafe to build on such data an argument for identity of authorship. Nor can we seriously suppose that Peter had received any Alexandrian culture. And far stronger evidence would be required to outweigh the impression which ii. 3 naturally makes, that the author had not been an immediate disciple of the Lord. Why, further, should all recollection of his authorship be lost?

A new theory has been propounded by Harnack. He agrees with Zahn that the letter was sent to an individual congregation in Rome. In seeking to determine the authorship he lays stress on two points. The first is that the author's name is lost. It was known to the readers, and it is not easy to understand why, if any of those usually mentioned had written it, the author's name should have been forgotten. It is probable that the name was intentionally suppressed. The second is that the writer represents not himself only, but one or more who are jointly responsible with him for the letter. This is inferred from the use of 'we,' where it is neither a literary use for 'I' (editorial 'we') nor a term including the readers with the author. In xiii. 18 the first person plural is used in this way, followed by the singular in

verse 19. So in verse 23 we have 'our brother Timothy' followed by 'I will see you.' 'Our brother' suggests to us no more than the fellow Christian of writer and readers. But in Greek this would more naturally be expressed by 'the brother.' It probably means 'our colleague,' in which case the plural pronoun contrasted with the immediately following singular suggests that the author writes for one or more besides himself. Moreover they speak of Timothy as their colleague, and therefore stood high in the ranks of teachers. On the basis of these facts Harnack suggests that the letter may have come from Priscilla and Aquila, the former being the actual writer. The discussion of this theory may conveniently begin with a reference to the argument which has done duty against ascribing the letter to Aquila. He could not have written it, it is said, because he seems to have been even less important than his wife. But what if his wife were a highly important person in the early church? It can have been no ordinary woman who instructed the learned and brilliant Apollos in the deeper Christian truths. Paul himself, no friend of women teachers, makes an exception in her case, speaking of her and her husband as his fellow workers in Christ Jesus. He adds that not only he but all the churches of the Gentiles owe them gratitude. They had risked their lives for him, and this may explain his own thanks. But it is hardly compatible with Paul's delicacy to say that the churches owe them thanks because they saved his life at the peril of their own. He means rather that their widely extended Christian work has earned for them the gratitude of the Gentile churches. We know that they laboured in three important centres, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. Paul's eulogy is couched in unusually strong language. If the letter was written to Rome, this is an added argument for their authorship, for a congregation met in their house at Rome (Rom. xvi. 5), and to this the letter may have been sent and the writer have longed to be restored.

They were also closely connected with Timothy, who was with them at Corinth and probably Ephesus along with Paul, who salutes them in Rom. xvi. 21, and is bidden to salute them in 2 Tim. iv. 19. The most noteworthy piece of evidence is the loss of the name. If the writer was a woman there was great temptation to suppress the fact. Paul himself disliked women teachers, and Clement would have good reason for not mentioning the authorship of the Epistle in a letter to the Corinthian church, when in a letter to the same church Paul had commanded the women to keep silence in the churches and pronounced it disgraceful for them to speak. And women teachers soon fell into discredit in the early church. Alexandrian culture may be due to contact with Apollos, and they may well have received the gospel from those who had heard the Lord. In their wandering life they may even have been present with Jews of Pontus, or sojourners from Rome, at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 9, 10). The arguments in favour of Apollos tell almost as strongly in favour of his teacher, and to these may be added the connexion with a house-church at Rome and the significant loss of the name. While it cannot be said that Harnack has proved his point, his identification seems to be the most probable that has yet been proposed.

VI. Date.

It has already been suggested that, if the letter was sent to Rome, it was written after the death of Paul and before the persecution of Nero had reached its severer stages. But we cannot build with certainty on this theory of the destination. It is commonly argued that the temple must have been standing. If the letter were sent to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem this would be practically certain, for an allusion to the destruction of city and temple might have been expected. In any case, it is said, the author could not have omitted to refer to so

stupendous a judgement on the Jewish ritual. But this argument may easily be overpressed. To an Alexandrian idealist the facts of history were less cogent proofs than the words of Scripture. And he cannot have forgotten that Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed before, yet Judaism had survived and city and sanctuary had been restored. If Titus had his triumph now, so Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus Epiphanes had had theirs before him. The Jews themselves seem to have been little shaken in their allegiance to Judaism by the catastrophe. A little while, only a little while, and the oppressor would fill the cup of wrong, and God would overwhelm him with the blast of His judgement. Why should they despair? The crowning impiety of the destruction of Jerusalem meant that judgement must be at hand. Why should the readers have felt the burning of the temple to be a proof of the abolition of the old covenant? It is nowhere suggested that the author wished them to break with the temple ritual, the aim of his great argument is that they should break with Judaism. It is not the cultus but the whole religion that is in his mind. That the tabernacle fills so large a place in his argument is due to the fact that sacrifice was the appointed means of approach to God and atonement for sin, alike in Judaism and in Christianity. With the sacrificial system as it was actually practised at Jerusalem he had nothing to do, but only with the system as made by the law an integral part of the religion. Nor can anything be inferred from the use of past or present tenses to shew that the temple ritual was or was not still carried on. The present expresses the fact that so it is enjoined in the Law, the past that with the founding of the New Covenant the Old had been abolished. Presents are similarly used after the destruction of Jerusalem by Josephus and Clement of Rome. Nor, again, does the reference to 'forty years' (iii. 9, 17) fix the date. The author, in fact, lays no emphasis on it, but apart from this it gains a good sense on

either view. It may be a warning before the blow fell from the fate of Israel in the wilderness, or after it fell it may point the moral of a double example. No argument can be drawn from the description of the old covenant as 'nigh to vanishing away' (viii. 13). The author means that it was this already in the time of Jeremiah, when the promise of the new covenant made the old antiquated.

So far, then, as the language of the Epistle and the general situation reflected in it are concerned, we may date it any time between the death of Paul and the close of the decade, A. D. 80–90. If the view that it was sent to Rome is correct, it should probably be dated in A. D. 64, though a date in the reign of Domitian would be more probable, if the language of x. 32–34 could be referred to the Neronian persecution.

VII. Literature.

For English readers the following commentaries may be recommended: *Alford, Delitzsch, *Lünemann (in Meyer), Moulton, Davidson, Farrar, *Westcott, Rendall, *Vaughan, Edwards (*Expositor's Bible*). Of these, those marked with an asterisk presuppose a knowledge of Greek, though readers ignorant of Greek may derive much help from them. In addition to the various works on New Testament introduction, the history of the Apostolic Age, and New Testament theology there are special works dealing with the introduction to and theology of this Epistle. The following may be mentioned:— Ayles, *Destination, Date, and Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews*; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*; G. Milligan, *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. The article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* by W. Robertson Smith, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (2nd edition) by Westcott, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* by Bruce, should also be referred to. That in the *Encyclo-*

paedia Biblica by von Soden has incorporated much of Robertson Smith's article, which however has been considerably altered, while a good deal of new matter has been added. It, along with the section on the Epistle in McGiffert's *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, presents the best statement of the view that the Epistle was not addressed to Jewish Christians.

The reader will be well advised to study thoroughly the commentary of A. B. Davidson, which, in spite of its unpretentious appearance, is one of the most valuable aids to getting at the thought of the Epistle ever written. This may be supplemented by the books of Bruce and G. Milligan already mentioned.

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THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

HEBREWS

AUTHORIZED VERSION

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

HEBREWS

The Son and the angels.

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners
spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
2 hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son,
whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by
3 whom also he made the worlds; who being the
brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of
his person, and upholding all things by the word
of his power, when he had by himself purged our
sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on
4 high; being made so much better than the angels,
as he hath by inheritance obtained a more
5 excellent name than they. For unto which of the
angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this
day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be
to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten
into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of
7 God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who
maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame
8 of fire. But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne,
O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteous-
9 ness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved
righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God,

Chap. 1

even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in 10
the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth;
and the heavens are the works of thine hands:
they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all 11
shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture 12
shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed:
but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.
But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit 13
on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy
footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, 14
sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs
of salvation?

Warning against neglect.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest **2**
heed to the things which we have heard, lest at
any time we should let *them* slip. For if the 2
word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every
transgression and disobedience received a just
recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if 3
we neglect so great salvation; which at the first
began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed
unto us by them that heard *him;* God also 4
bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders,
and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy
Ghost, according to his own will?

Our Captain's progress through suffering to glory.

For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection 5
the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in 6
a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that
thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that
thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little 7
lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with
glory and honour, and didst set him over the
works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in 8

subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all
9 things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for
10 every man. For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their
11 salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call
12 them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing
13 praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children
14 which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the
15 power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime
16 subject to bondage. For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the
17 seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation
18 for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

3 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the

Chap. 3

heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High
Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was 2
faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses
was faithful in all his house. For this *man* was 3
counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch
as he who hath builded the house hath more honour
than the house. For every house is builded by 4
some *man;* but he that built all things *is* God.
And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as 5
a servant, for a testimony of those things which
were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over 6
his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast
the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm
unto the end. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost 7
saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden 8
not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day
of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers 9
tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty
years. Wherefore I was grieved with that genera- 10
tion, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart;
and they have not known my ways. So I sware in 11
my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take 12
heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil
heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.
But exhort one another daily, while it is called 13
To day; lest any of you be hardened through the
deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers 14
of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence
stedfast unto the end; while it is said, To day if 15
ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as
in the provocation. For some, when they had 16
heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came
out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he 17

Christ and Moses.

Israel's fate a warning against unbelief.

grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had
18 sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And
to whom sware he that they should not enter into
19 his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see
that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The rest of God.

4 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left
us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem
2 to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel
preached, as well as unto them: but the word
preached did not profit them, not being mixed
3 with faith in them that heard *it*. For we which
have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I
have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into
my rest: although the works were finished from
4 the foundation of the world. For he spake in
a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise,
And God did rest the seventh day from all his
5 works. And in this *place* again, If they shall enter
6 into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that
some must enter therein, and they to whom it was
first preached entered not in because of unbelief:
7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David,
To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day
if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.
8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he
9 not afterward have spoken of another day. There
remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.
10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath
ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.
11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest,
lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.
12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and
sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even

Chap. 4

to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there 13
any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Our sympathetic high-priest.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, 14
that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have 15
not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, *yet* without sin. Let us 16
therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Christ a true high-priest.

For every high priest taken from among men is 5
ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:
who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on 2
them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason 3
hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh 4
this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron. So also Christ glorified not 5
himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another *place*, 6
Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of his flesh, when 7
he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he

8 feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he
9 obedience by the things which he suffered; and
being made perfect, he became the author of
eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
10 called of God an high priest after the order of
Melchisedec.

The dullness of the readers.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard
12 to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For
when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have
need that one teach you again which *be* the first
principles of the oracles of God; and are become
such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.
13 For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the
14 word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But
strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age,
even those who by reason of use have their senses
exercised to discern both good and evil.

The awfulness of apostasy.

6 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine
of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying
again the foundation of repentance from dead
2 works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine
of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of
resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.
3,4 And this will we do, if God permit. For *it is*
impossible for those who were once enlightened,
and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were
5 made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have
tasted the good word of God, and the powers of
6 the world to come, if they shall fall away, to
renew them again unto repentance; seeing they
crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and
7 put *him* to an open shame. For the earth which
drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and

Chap. 6

bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that 8
which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and
is nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned.

The readers' noble past.

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of 9
you, and things that accompany salvation, though
we thus speak. For God *is* not unrighteous to 10
forget your work and labour of love, which ye have
shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered
to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that 11
every one of you do shew the same diligence to
the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye 12
be not slothful, but followers of them who through
faith and patience inherit the promises.

God's oath.

For when God made promise to Abraham, 13
because he could swear by no greater, he sware by
himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, 14
and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after 15
he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.
For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath 16
for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife.
Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto 17
the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel,
confirmed *it* by an oath: that by two immutable 18
things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we
might have a strong consolation, who have fled for
refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which 19
hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure
and stedfast, and which entereth into that within
the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, 20
even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the
order of Melchisedec.

Melchisedec.

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of 7

the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King 3 of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Chap. 7

4 Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth 5 of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that 7 had the promises. And without all contradiction 8 the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, 9 of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, 10 payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. **Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec.**

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, 12 and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of 13 necessity a change also of the law. For he of **The priesthood of Christ and the Levitical.**

Chap. 7

whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; 14 of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for 15 that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of 16 a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest 17 for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there 18 is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but 19 the bringing in of a better hope *did;* by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not 20 without an oath *he was made priest:* (for those 21 priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) by so much 22 was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they 23 were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath 24 an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able 25 also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The perfection of our high-priest.

For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, 26 harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not 27 daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's:

for this he did once, when he offered up himself.
28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

The true tabernacle and the new covenant.

8 Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in
2 the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and
3 not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity
4 that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to
5 the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.
6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon
7 better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been
8 sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the
9 house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded

Chap. 8

them not, saith the Lord. For this *is* the covenant 10
that I will make with the house of Israel after
those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws
into their mind, and write them in their hearts:
and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to
me a people: and they shall not teach every man 11
his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying,
Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the
least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to 12
their unrighteousness, and their sins and their
iniquities will I remember no more. In that he 13
saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old.
Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready
to vanish away.

The sanctuary of the Law.

Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances 9
of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For 2
there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein
was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-
bread; which is called the sanctuary. And after 3
the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the
Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and 4
the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with
gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna,
and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of
the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory 5
shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot
now speak particularly. Now when these things 6
were thus ordained, the priests went always into
the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of*
God. But into the second *went* the high priest 7
alone once every year, not without blood, which
he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the
people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the 8

way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:
9 which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect,
10 as pertaining to the conscience; *which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation.

The blood of Christ.

11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say,
12 not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal
13 redemption *for us*. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:
14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead
15 works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of
16 eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the
17 testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while
18 the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first
19 *testament* was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people

Chap. 9

according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This *is* the blood of the testament 20
which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he 21
sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things 22
are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Our priest in heaven.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns 23
of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not 24
entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as 25
the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often 26
have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.
And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but 27
after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered 28
to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

The Law's vain sacrifices and the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

For the law having a shadow of good things to 10
come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to 2
be offered? because that the worshippers once

purged should have had no more conscience of Chap. 10
3 sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance
4 again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not
possible that the blood of bulls and of goats
5 should take away sins. Wherefore when he
cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and
offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou
6 prepared me: in burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for
7 sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo,
I come (in the volume of the book it is written of
8 me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said,
Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and
offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst
pleasure *therein;* which are offered by the law;
9 then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.
He taketh away the first, that he may establish
10 the second. By the which will we are sanctified
through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ
11 once *for all.* And every priest standeth daily
ministering and offering oftentimes the same
12 sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but
this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins
13 for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from
henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his
14 footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected
15 for ever them that are sanctified. *Whereof* the
Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that
16 he had said before, This *is* the covenant that I
will make with them after those days, saith the
Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in
17 their minds will I write them; and their sins and
18 iniquities will I remember no more. Now where re-
mission of these *is*, *there is* no more offering for sin.

Chap. 10

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter 19
Draw near. into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new 20
and living way, which he hath consecrated for us,
through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and 21
having an high priest over the house of God; let 22
us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of
faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil
conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without 23
wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) and 24
let us consider one another to provoke unto love
and to good works: not forsaking the assembling 25
of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is;*
but exhorting *one another:* and so much the more,
as ye see the day approaching.

The penalty of apostasy.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received 26
the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no
more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking 27
for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall
devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' 28
law died without mercy under two or three wit-
nesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose 29
ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden
under foot the Son of God, and hath counted
the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was
sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite
unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that 30
hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will
recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord
shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall 31
into the hands of the living God.

Endure a little longer.

But call to remembrance the former days, in 32
which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a

33 great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of
34 them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.
35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which
36 hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God,
37 ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not
38 tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in
39 him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Chap. 10

11 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, **Faith.**
2 the evidence of things not seen. For by it the
3 elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were
4 not made of things which do appear. By faith **The faith of Abel.** Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and
5 by it he being dead yet speaketh. By faith Enoch **Enoch.** was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony,
6 that he pleased God. But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him:* for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a

Chap. 11

Noah.

rewarder of them that diligently seek him. By 7
faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen
as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the
saving of his house; by the which he condemned
the world, and became heir of the righteousness
which is by faith.

Abraham and Sarah.

By faith Abraham, when he was 8
called to go out into a place which he should after
receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went
out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he 9
sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange
country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and
Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for 10
he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose
builder and maker *is* God. Through faith also Sara 11
herself received strength to conceive seed, and was
delivered of a child when she was past age, because
she judged him faithful who had promised. There- 12
fore sprang there even of one, and him as good as
dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude,
and as the sand which is by the sea shore
innumerable.

Faith is not content with earth.

These all died in faith, not having received the 13
promises, but having seen them afar off, and were
persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and con-
fessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on
the earth. For they that say such things declare 14
plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if 15
they had been mindful of that *country* from
whence they came out, they might have had
opportunity to have returned. But now they 16
desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly:
wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their
God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up
Isaac: and he that had received the promises
18 offered up his only begotten *son*, of whom it was
said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:
19 accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up,
even from the dead; from whence also he received
20 him in a figure. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and
21 Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob,
when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of
Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of
22 his staff. By faith Joseph, when he died, made
mention of the departing of the children of Israel;
and gave commandment concerning his bones.
23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid
three months of his parents, because they saw *he*
was a proper child; and they were not afraid of
24 the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when
he was come to years, refused to be called the son
25 of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer
affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy
26 the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the
reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures
in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence
27 of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not
fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as
28 seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he
kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest
he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.
29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry
land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were
30 drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down,
31 after they were compassed about seven days. By
faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that

The sacrifice of Isaac.

Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Moses and his parents.

The Red Sea, Jericho, and Rahab.

Chap. 11

believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time 32
would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and *of* Barak, and
of Samson, and *of* Jephthae; *of* David also, and
Samuel, and *of* the prophets: who through faith 33
subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained
promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched 34
the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword,
out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant
in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.
Women received their dead raised to life again: 35
and others were tortured, not accepting deliver-
ance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:
and others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourg- 36
ings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:
they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were 37
tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered
about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute,
afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was 38
not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in*
mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.
And these all, having obtained a good report 39
through faith, received not the promise: God 40
having provided some better thing for us, that
they without us should not be made perfect.

Later heroes of faith.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about **12**
with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside
every weight, and the sin which doth so easily
beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that
is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and 2
finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set
before him endured the cross, despising the shame,
and is set down at the right hand of the throne

Suffering proves our sonship.

3 of God. For consider him that endured such Chap. 12
contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be
4 wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not
5 yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And
ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh
unto you as unto children, My son, despise
not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint
6 when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the
Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every
7 son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening,
God dealeth with you as with sons; for what
8 son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But
if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are
partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.
9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh
which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence:
shall we not much rather be in subjection unto
10 the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for
a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure;
but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers
11 of his holiness. Now no chastening for the
present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: never-
theless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit
of righteousness unto them which are exercised
12 thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang
13 down, and the feeble knees; and make straight
paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be
turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

14 Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, with- Take heed.
15 out which no man shall see the Lord: looking
diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;
lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble
16 *you*, and thereby many be defiled; lest there *be*

Chap. 12

any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For 17
ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Sinai and Zion.

For ye are not come unto the mount that might 18
be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the 19
sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they 20
could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I 21
exceedingly fear and quake:) but ye are come 22
unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly 23
and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the 24
mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. 25

God's voice.

For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he 26
hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this *word*, 27
Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those

things that are shaken, as of things that are made,
that those things which cannot be shaken may
28 remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which
cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we
may serve God acceptably with reverence and
29 godly fear: for our God *is* a consuming fire.

Love, purity, contentment.

13 2 Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful
to entertain strangers: for thereby some have
3 entertained angels unawares. Remember them that
are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them
which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in
4 the body. Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the
bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers
5 God will judge. *Let your* conversation *be* without
covetousness; *and be* content with such things as
ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee,
6 nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The
Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man
shall do unto me.

Our sacrifice admits no sacrificial meal.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you,
who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose
faith follow, considering the end of *their* conver-
8 sation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to
9 day, and for ever. Be not carried about with
divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good
thing that the heart be established with grace; not
with meats, which have not profited them that
10 have been occupied therein. We have an altar,
whereof they have no right to eat which serve the
11 tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose
blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high
priest for sin, are burned without the camp.
12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the

Chap. 13

people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without 13
the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have 14
we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.
By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise 15
to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips
giving thanks to his name. But to do good and 16
to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices
God is well pleased. Obey them that have the 17
rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they
watch for your souls, as they that must give account,
that they may do it with joy, and not with grief:
for that *is* unprofitable for you.

Request for prayer.

Pray for us: for we trust we have a good 18
conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.
But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may 19
be restored to you the sooner.

Prayer for the readers.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from 20
the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of
the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting
covenant, make you perfect in every good work 21
to do his will, working in you that which is well-
pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to
whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Conclusion.

And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word 22
of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto
you in few words. Know ye that *our* brother 23
Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come
shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that 24
have the rule over you, and all the saints. They
of Italy salute you. Grace *be* with you all. Amen. 25

Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

HEBREWS

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

HEBREWS

GOD, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in 1

THE title: **The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews.** On the ascription of the Epistle to Paul see the Introduction, pp. 28–33. The oldest MSS. simply have the title 'To the Hebrews,' on which see the Introduction, p. 13.

i. 1–3. *God's old and new revelations.* God, who had uttered fragmentary revelations in the prophets, has now spoken in a Son, the creator and heir of the universe and the perfect expression of his Father's essential being, who, after making purification of sins, sat at God's right hand.

1. The author omits the usual formula of salutation, in order that nothing may mar the effect of the stately introduction of his theme. The soaring thought is fitly matched by noble eloquence, to which a translation does but scanty justice. It is the author's purpose to prove that Christianity is superior as a religion to Judaism, and that it has, in fact, perfectly solved the problem which confronts every religion. For the great end which religion seeks to reach is the unhindered fellowship of man with God. If this is to be gained, there must first be given an adequate knowledge of God. And since history shews that man cannot, if left to himself, attain this, it must be given from above; in other words, the religion must be a religion of revelation. But the knowledge of God brings with it the consciousness of guilt, such as Isaiah expressed, when he had seen the Lord in His majesty and heard the seraphim praising His holiness: 'Woe is me, for I am undone.' No fellowship is possible till the guilt be purged away, and the sin which rules the life lose its power. Hence the religion which is to meet man's need must be not only a religion of revelation, but a religion also of redemption; though we might perhaps more truly say that the redemption is just the deepest element in the revelation. It is with the contrast of

the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners,

Christianity to Judaism as a religion of redemption that the Epistle is chiefly concerned. But the two religions are also contrasted in the sphere of revelation, and especially in the opening section. In an argument for the superiority of Christianity the line might have been taken, which was afterwards adopted by some of the Gnostics and Marcion, that the O. T. contained no true revelation of God. The author guards against this by the assertion that the God who has spoken to us in a Son, spoke to the fathers in the prophets. He bases the superiority of Christianity not on a distinction in the ultimate source of the two religions, but on the difference in the channels through which they have come. The O. T. revelation was given in many parts and many modes, it was fragmentary in its presentation of truth and changeful in the manner in which it came, and it was given through a multiplicity of agents. Over against it stands the revelation in a Son, given not in isolated fragments but as a harmonious whole, not through many agents but through one. While human instruments could be but imperfect organs of the Divine, a Son is the perfectly adequate expression of the Father.

of old time. Between the time of Malachi and the birth of Christ stretched an interval of about four centuries and a half. It is true that much in the O. T. is now known to be later than that time, but it was the common Jewish view that since the age of Ezra revelation had ceased.

unto the fathers: that is, the Israelitish and Jewish peoples. The most natural inference from this is that the author includes not himself only but his readers also among born Jews. This, however, is not certain, for Gentile Christians could be spoken of as Israelites in the spiritual sense, and in Rom. ix. 5 Paul speaks of 'the fathers,' though the church at Rome seems in the main to have consisted of Gentiles.

in the prophets. It might seem at first sight that the prophets in the narrower sense are contrasted with the Son, and that the contrast between Law and Gospel is covered by that drawn later between the angels and Moses on the one hand and the Son on the other. But the writer speaks of the prophets in the widest sense of the term as covering the whole O. T. revelation, for in an introduction which sets forth the leading thoughts of the Epistle the restricted application of the word is out of the question. The wider use is correct, for Moses was regarded as a prophet, and indeed is spoken of by Philo as the greatest of the prophets.

by divers portions and in divers manners: *better*, 'in many parts and in many modes.' The two phrases are not, as some have thought, rhetorical variations for the same idea. 'Many parts' refers to the necessarily piecemeal character of the revela-

hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in *his* Son, 2

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tion, due to the many spokesmen through whom it came and the long ages during which it was slowly completed. 'Many modes' is often explained of the different methods used by God in communicating His message to the prophets, such as dreams, visions, speech face to face, or the compulsion of an inner conviction. But the author is speaking, not of the forms in which God spoke *to* the prophets, but of the modes in which He spoke *through* them to the fathers. The message took the form of law or prophecy, of history or psalm; now it was given in signs, now in types. The author does not mean to assert the rich and many-sided character of the O. T., but rather to point out how the original unity of the message, secured by the unity of its author, is shattered by passing through so many media and finding expression in so many forms. But we should probably not infer that the message was in any way altered in its passage through the human medium; God was, in the author's view, the sole speaker, and the inferiority of the prophetic word was one of defect rather than distortion. The prophets faithfully uttered God's word, but in the nature of things there was much God could not say through them.

2. at the end of these days. This phrase is modelled on one which is frequent in the O. T., and is translated 'in the latter days.' The LXX often translated it 'at the end of the days.' Since it occurs several times in Messianic prophecies, it got the technical significance of the days of the Messiah. The Jews entitled the pre-Messianic and the Messianic time 'this age' and 'the age to come.' The actual days of the Messiah were regarded by some as belonging to this age, by others to the age to come, while others again placed them between the two as distinct from both. Here by changing the formula from 'at the end of the days' to 'at the end of these days,' the author identifies the days of the Messiah with the close of 'this age.' It is not quite clear when he conceived 'the age to come' as beginning on earth. It might be regarded as inaugurated either by the death of the Messiah and the institution of the New Covenant, or by the Second Coming which was thought to be close at hand. This is perhaps one of the uncertainties raised by the double point of view, ideal and actual, in the Epistle. The public ministry of the Son would in either case fall before the beginning of the age to come, but it may be asked whether we should limit God's revelation in the Son to his preaching, and not include his death.

in his Son: better as in the marg., 'in a Son.' The emphasis is not on the identity of the revealer, but on his filial nature; the question is not *who* but *what* he is. What God speaks in a Son is superior to what He spoke in the prophets. And that not

whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom

merely on account of his loftier dignity, but on that of intrinsic fitness. God's speech in the Son is not limited to the teaching of Jesus. So far as God is thought of as the real speaker, that teaching could have been given through others; but the revelation in the Son consists far less in the word he utters than in the Word he is. His life and death were a revelation of God, more articulate and vivid than any utterance about Him could be. He is God's self-expression, and, as he comes into human life, he is God's self-translation from the language of eternity into the speech of time. Even to speak God's word adequately was not possible to the prophets, since revelation was conditioned by human experience, and the prophet had to learn his message through the conflict of his own soul, while no merely human experience could be adequate to the full apprehension of the Divine thought. But on this the author does not dwell, for to him the prophets are mere organs of the Divine speaker, the word being uncoloured by their personal experience. But to translate the life and character of God into human life and character was possible only to one who was himself one with God. Sonship implied that communion of essence which made this highest of all revelations possible. And since it is the highest, Christianity is not simply better than Judaism, but the best of all possible religions. It is the final religion, because in the Son God has spoken His last word. It should further be pointed out that 'in a Son' is contrasted not simply with 'in the prophets,' but also with 'in many parts and many modes.' The revelation in the Son is once for all complete and cannot be supplemented, and it is homogeneous.

In the description, which now follows, of the dignity and work of the Son, it is remarkable that the writer's hold on the unity of the Person in his various states is so firm, and that he moves with such freedom from one to the other. The Son through whom God made the world is no other than he who made purification of sins and sat down at the right hand of God. The doctrine of his Person is practically identical with that which we find in Paul and John. As by them great stress is laid on his relation to the universe. He is the agent in its creation, its sustainer, and the heir who is to possess it. The writer wishes, no doubt, to set forth the dignity of the Son, especially in contrast to the angels, whose relation to the universe held a prominent place in contemporary Jewish thought. But probably he also saw in this something that fitted him to be the medium both of revelation and redemption.

whom he appointed heir of all things. It has been much disputed when this appointment was made. Many refer it to the Son's entrance into heaven after he had completed the work of redemption. It does not seem a valid objection to this that when

also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of 3

the Son sat down on the right hand of God he received his inheritance and therefore ceased to be heir. For though he sits at God's right hand he has still to wait till all things are made subject to him, and is therefore not yet the possessor but only the heir. The order of the words, however, makes it probable that the appointment is prior to the creation of the world, and so belongs to the sphere of eternity. The decree to make the Son heir of the universe might then be regarded as contemporary with the purpose to create it. A third possibility, which however is also exposed to the objection from the order, is that the appointment was made by a declaration in the O. T.; e.g. Ps. ii. 8, a passage which may in any case have suggested the designation. But it may quite as well have been an inference from the description of the Son as the firstborn.

through whom also he made the worlds. It was fitting that he who had been designated heir of the universe should prove his title to this high dignity by creating it. The word translated 'worlds' means *lit.* 'ages' (marg.), and many give it that meaning here. If correctly, there may be a reference to the two ages of the world's history, 'this age' and 'the age to come.' This would be interesting as shewing that, though the Son was not the ruler of this age, he was its creator. The angels were apparently regarded as rulers of this age, a thought which seems to be expressed also in 1 Cor. ii. 6–8. But more probably if the notion of time is to be retained, it should include the contents of time, perhaps what we understand by nature and history. It seems simpler to suppose that, as happened also with the corresponding Hebrew word, the idea of time has been eliminated and the word means the worlds. This is the meaning in xi. 3, and that determines its sense here.

3. who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance. This passage, while of great importance for the writer's doctrine of the Person of Christ and the development of that doctrine in the church, is of somewhat uncertain meaning. The word translated 'effulgence[1]' was borrowed from the terminology of the Alexandrian schools. It occurs in the Wisdom of Solomon in a passage which has probably influenced the choice of language here. Speaking of wisdom the writer says: 'For she is an effulgence from everlasting light, and an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness' (Wisd. of Sol. vii. 26). The word occurs often in Philo, but not in the LXX and nowhere else in the N. T. It may mean either 'reflection' or 'radiance,' and both renderings have been defended by eminent authorities, though the majority of recent commentators

[1] ἀπαύγασμα.

his glory, and the very image of his substance, and

prefer the latter. If this be the meaning, the metaphor expresses the derivation of the Son from the Father and his distinction from Him, under the figure of the radiance which streams forth from a body of light, and gains an independent existence of its own. The point of the figures lies less in the process than in the result, as is indicated by the passive termination of the word. The translation 'reflection,' which should have been given in the margin as an alternative, while it includes the ideas of derivation and distinction, suggests chiefly the exact resemblance of the Son to the Father. Since this is the idea expressed in the following clause, it is perhaps better to retain the translation given in the text. The 'glory' of God is His manifested nature, His being as it is presented to the universe. The idea of physical brightness has passed over into that of His infinite purity and holiness. The choice of the word here has probably been influenced by its connexion with 'radiance.' The phrase 'the effulgence of his glory' thus expresses the Son's relations alike to God and the world. While he derives his being from the Father, he is also His manifestation to the world.

Instead of **the very image of his substance** the margin gives 'the impress of his substance': it would be still better to translate 'the impress of his essence.' The word translated 'impress[1]' meant originally an instrument for marking or engraving; it then came to be used of the impression on a seal or die. Philo speaks of the Logos as the impression on the seal of God, and von Soden has therefore adopted this meaning here, taking men to be the imprint struck off with this seal, a most improbable view. The word was also used for the figure struck off by the seal, and hence of an exact representation or facsimile of the original, the clear-cut impress which possesses all its 'characteristics.' The word occurs only here in the N. T. 'Essence[2]' is literally that which stands under, and thus comes to mean the underlying reality of a thing, the qualities which constitute it what it is. 'Substance' is the exact etymological equivalent, but the associations of the word make it undesirable to use it in this connexion. In later theological language the word got the technical sense of a Person in the Godhead, so that much confusion was caused through the use of conflicting phraseology by those who held the same belief. Some orthodox writers spoke of one 'hypostasis,' referring to the unity of essence, while others spoke of three 'hypostases,' meaning three 'Persons.' Here the word is used in the sense of 'essence.' The phrase thus expresses that the Son is the exact counterpart of the Father, and the first two clauses of the verse taken together assert his essential divinity.

[1] *χαρακτήρ.* [2] *ὑπόστασις.*

upholding all things by the word of his power, when he

upholding all things by the word of his power: thus the Son is not only the agent in creation, but the sustainer of the universe. Philo attributes a similar function to the Logos, and we may also compare Paul's language in Col. i. 17. 'Upholding' scarcely brings out the full meaning of the word, which implies also the 'bearing' it forward towards a goal. In xi. 3 creation is ascribed to the word of God. The term translated 'word' here and in xi. 3 is not *logos* but *rhēma*, and the reference in xi. 3 is to the creative word 'and God said' in Gen. i. It is not clear whether 'his power' means the power of God or of Christ. In favour of the former is the fact that in the preceding clauses the pronoun refers to God, and if it is to be taken so here, the meaning is that God has committed to the Son His omnipotent word, to wield in the upholding, as formerly in the creation, of the universe. On the other hand, the immediate impression of the passage favours the reference to the Son, and the conception of his Divine dignity is enhanced if the word of power be his in his own right.

An important question is raised as to the period in the Son's history to which the present participles in this verse ('being,' 'bearing') should be referred. By some they are assigned to each of the three stages of his existence—the pre-incarnate, the incarnate, and the exalted. It is difficult to believe that the writer, who so firmly grasped the limitations of the Son's life on earth, should have thought of him as upholding the universe during his humiliation. It belonged to him through every stage of his existence to be the radiance of God's glory and the impress of His essence, for this was an inalienable part of his personality, but this does not imply that in his earthly life he maintained those relations to the universe which he had formerly exercised. It is therefore better to refer these clauses to his pre-incarnate life, and the present participles are all the more suitable that the states described belong to eternity rather than time. We thus secure the orderly development of the Son's history through its successive stages.

when he had made purification of sins. The writer now passes to the Son's redemptive work, which is the central theme of his Epistle, touching it only lightly, since he will speak of it fully in due course. The Son's ability to perform this work is conferred upon him through his relation to the Father and the universe, and its accomplishment is rewarded by the session at the right hand of God. The phrase is a little difficult, and may be explained either, he purified sins away, as in the passage 'his leprosy was cleansed' (Matt. viii. 3), or, he purified mankind from sins. The plural here fixes attention on the accumulated acts of

had made purification of sins, sat down on the right
4 hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so

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human transgression rather than on the sinful nature from which they sprang.

sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. The language is suggested by Ps. cx. 1, which is quoted in verse 13, and referred to in viii. 1, x. 12, xii. 2. The session at the right hand of God indicates the completion of his work and its acceptance by God, and also that his position is one of Divine dignity and dominion. Nevertheless his rule is not unchallenged, for he still waits till his enemies are made his footstool. The effect is heightened, in the Greek especially, by the full-sounding phrase 'the Majesty on high.' The controversy between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, whether the right hand of God is to be locally conceived or not, however interesting in itself, and important for its bearing on the question of the ubiquity of Christ's body and the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, is without significance for the exegesis of this passage.

i. 4–14. *The Son and the angels.* The Son has become better than the angels, since, as Scripture asserts, he is God's Son, whose kingdom shall have no end, while the angels are but servants, with a transient personality.

4. In this verse the writer skilfully effects the transition from his general contrast between the word spoken in the Son and that spoken in the prophets, to the first point in his detailed proof. This is that the Son is exalted far above the angels, and therefore the word he speaks comes to us with more imperious claims on our acceptance, claims justified alike by the dignity of the speaker and the intrinsic worth of his message. It is usually agreed that the angels fill so prominent a place in the argument because they were the mediators through whom the law was given. This view is not found in the O. T., but there is a reference to the presence of the angels at the giving of the law in the LXX text of Deut. xxxiii. 2. It was widely received among the Jews in the time of Christ, and is three times asserted in the N. T. (ii. 2; Gal. iii. 19; Acts vii. 53, cf. verse 38). The mediation of these august celestial dignitaries was naturally felt to enhance the value of the law. If, then, the writer wished to undermine the belief in the permanence of the law, it was a great point gained if he could shew the inferiority of its mediators to the mediator of the New Covenant. That he begins his argument with the mediators and only gradually comes to close quarters with the law itself, is due to the skill in the conduct of his case, which saved him from attacking his readers in their most firmly held position till he had effectively weakened their grasp on some of

much better than the angels, as he hath inherited

its strongest supports. And to this dialectical skill we should also attribute the strange failure, as it seems, to drive home the inference as to the law, which follows from the position assigned to the angels. He hints at this for the present, by-and-by the time will come for him to unmask his batteries. We need not therefore argue with Weiss that the author's main purpose is to exhibit the exalted position of the Son by the fact that it is higher even than that of the angels, who hold the chief rank in creation. Weiss thus makes the first chapter a mere introduction, intended to urge the importance of the message spoken by the Son, instead of an integral part of the proof of its superiority to Judaism. And this places the reader at the wrong point of view for appreciating the drift of the argument. For the author does not mean How great must the Son be, since he is greater even than the angels! but How great is the Son, and how incomparably inferior are the angels! The high dignity of the Son may seem to guarantee the superiority of Christianity less adequately to us than to the author. But we must remember that the contrast between law and gospel was part of a wider contrast, that of the two ages, or of this world and the world to come. Hence the proof that the Son, and not the angels, is Lord of the world to come has a very real bearing on the relation of the two religions. It may be observed that while the law is the portion of the O. T. specially kept in view as given by the angels, they are also prominent in prophecy and Apocalyptic from the time of Ezekiel onwards. It seems unnecessary to find in this chapter, as some scholars do, an attack upon angel-worship. We have reason to believe that this practice existed among Jews in the Apostolic Age, but none to find it attacked here. It would have been condemned explicitly and not by inference. Nor does there seem to be any reference to the view that the Messiah was an angel. It is possible that the development of the doctrine of the Son in this chapter has been conditioned by current Jewish angelology as well as by the Logos doctrine of Alexandria.

having become by so much better than the angels. The words 'having become' suggest a difficult question. What relation did the exalted state of the Son bear, in the author's mind, to the pre-incarnate? He is, of course, made lower than the angels in his earthly life, and therefore has to 'become' better than they when the period of humiliation is passed. But are we to regard this as the return to an old or the attainment of a new position? From the fact that his present superiority to the angels is joined with the loftier excellence of the name he has inherited, it might be argued that this name was conferred upon him only on his return to heaven. But since the name seems to be that of 'Son'

5 a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time,

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or 'My Son,' he cannot have received it for the first time when he returned to heaven, for he was Son during his life on earth (i. 2, v. 8). Since, further, in the pre-incarnate state he was the agent in creation, he must always have been better than the angels. The return is therefore to a position he had previously possessed, but with this difference, that it was the return not merely of a Divine but a Divine-human Person, which thus guaranteed the ultimate elevation of mankind above the angels. Some scholars give to 'better' the specific sense of 'mightier,' and probably the emphasis is on the superiority in position rather than in moral excellence, for the latter would be true of all stages in his career, even though in the human life there was moral discipline and therefore moral progress. At the same time we should not restrict the meaning in this way. The Son's superiority to the angels includes a moral as well as what we may call a physical element. He was better than the angels in both respects before the Incarnation. But the Incarnation affected both. Not only was there moral progress during the incarnate life; the Incarnation itself marked a great moral advance. Not that the sacrificing love became greater, but that it found an expression hitherto denied. And, further, while the Son did not need to become incarnate that he might love man to the uttermost, the Incarnation marked a moral advance in that he thus learned sympathy. But while the Incarnation brought with it a moral enrichment, it demanded also a physical impoverishment, he was made lower than the angels. At his Exaltation he resumed a position above them, corresponding to the greater excellence of the name he had all along possessed, with all the added lustre of redemptive achievement and enhanced moral greatness. The formula of comparison 'by so much . . . as' occurs often in this Epistle and in Philo, but never in Paul.

as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. According to verse 5 the name seems to be that of 'Son' or 'My Son.' It is hardly probable that Delitzsch is right in thinking that the name is the Ineffable Name, of which 'Son,' 'God,' 'Lord,' are hints. Nor can we with von Soden regard it as the whole collective idea expressed in the words, 'a Son whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds.' This is no 'name,' nor can the meaning, 'nature,' which he imposes on 'name' be vindicated. On the difficulty that the angels are called sons of God, see the note on verse 5. It is not said when the Son inherited this more excellent name. But, in spite of the connexion with the preceding clause, which refers to the exalta-

Thou art my Son,
This day have I begotten thee?

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tion, we should probably think of his eternal possession of it. For in verse 2 he through whom God made the worlds is spoken of as a Son. We should not, therefore, imagine the reference to be to the giving of the name in O. T. prophecy, or after the return to heaven. It is unfortunate that the English version is unable to preserve the significant distinction in the tenses of the original ('having become' translating an aorist, and 'he hath inherited' a perfect).

5. In this verse we have two passages quoted from the O. T., containing the more excellent name, coupled with a question implying that such a name had never been given to any angel. This question is conclusive against the view of some modern interpreters that the writer regarded the Son as an angel. Had he done so, he could not have asked such a question, for this would then have been a case where an angel had received the name. A difficulty is raised by the fact that in the O. T. the angels are several times called 'the sons of God' (b^{e}ne Elohim). But this phrase scarcely carries with it all that it naturally suggests to us. It really means no more than beings who possess the Elohim nature in contrast to men, and probably there is no reference to any actual sonship to God. It is further to be noticed that this term is always applied to the angels as a class, never to individuals, and the form in which the writer puts the question indicates that he laid stress upon the individual reference. At the same time it is quite likely that he was not aware that this title was applied to the angels in the O. T. For the LXX usually translated it 'angels of God,' and of the three exceptions two (Ps. xxix. 1, lxxxix. 6) may not have been present to his mind, while the narrative in Gen. vi. 1–4 may have been otherwise explained by him.

The first quotation is from Ps. ii. 7. The Psalm was currently interpreted as Messianic, and if it is post-exilic, as many critics think, it may have been originally so intended. The nations are warned that the revolt they are plotting against the Lord's Anointed will be futile, and that humble submission may save them from his fury. The begetting of the Son seems in the Psalm to be a metaphor for his coronation. In Acts xiii. 33 Paul quotes it as fulfilled in the Resurrection of Jesus, and it was applied by some in the early church to his Baptism. Thus there is a 'Western' reading of Luke iii. 22 which gives these words as the voice from heaven, and the Ebionites seem also to have taken the same view. Many scholars explain it of the Exaltation, which in this Epistle holds much the same place as the Resurrection in

and again,

I will be to him a Father,
And he shall be to me a Son?

6 And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the

Paul. In favour of this might be urged its connexion with the words 'having become by so much better than the angels,' which refer to the Exaltation, and the fact that the quotation in verse 13, introduced by a similar formula, must be so explained. In that case the begetting is to be interpreted of the entrance of the Messiah on his heavenly reign, which would correspond closely to the original significance of the words, and yield a thought similar to that in Rom. i. 4. Nevertheless this view should probably be set aside; for the sense of the quotation is determined by the second clause of the preceding verse rather than by the first, and if that has been rightly interpreted we must refer the begetting of the Son to eternity. And although such an application of 'to-day' may seem to us artificial, it is found in Philo, and was therefore probably familiar to the author. Weiss, following Riehm, takes the very improbable view that the words 'This day have I begotten thee' have no relation to the chain of thought, and were added merely to identify the quotation. He thinks that if the author attached any definite meaning to them, he referred them to the time when the name was first used in O. T. prophecy. Other have explained them of the Incarnation.

I will be to him a Father, And he shall be to me a Son. The quotation is taken from 2 Sam. vii. 14. It occurs in an oracle addressed by Nathan to David. The prophet tells the king that he is not to build the temple, but his son, whom Yahweh will take for His son, chastening him if he commit iniquity, yet establishing the throne of his house for ever. The passage, which in its present form is post-Deuteronomic, is obviously not Messianic in the N. T. sense, but the non-fulfilment of the prophecy in a political sense may have extended the application to the everlasting spiritual reign of the Son of David. Paul quotes the passage freely (2 Cor. vi. 18), and applies it to the relation between God and Christians generally.

6. Not only has the Son this more excellent name, which none of the angels has ever received, but his superiority to them is further demonstrated by the command that they shall worship him.

And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world. It is uncertain whether this translation or that in the margin, 'And again, when he bringeth in,' should be adopted. In favour of the former is the order in the Greek, which suggests

world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, 7

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that 'again' should be connected with the verb as an adverb of time. It is, in fact, held by some to be grammatically inadmissible to translate as in the margin. Against this may be set the very high authority of Dr. Field, as well as that of some of the most eminent commentators. And if we translate 'when he again bringeth,' there is a tacit contrast of a second with a first introduction of the Son into the world, but no mention of such a first introduction has been made. The frequent use of 'again' in the Epistle to introduce a new quotation is also in favour of the marginal rendering. If we adopt the translation in the text, the second bringing in can refer only to the Second Coming. But even with the marginal translation this reference is to be preferred. The Greek construction is used of an event still future at the time of writing, so that we should translate 'when he shall have brought in.' We should therefore not think with Bleek of a solemn act before the Incarnation, by which the Father presented the Son to the universe as the firstborn who had created it; nor of the Incarnation, against which there lies the further objection that the Son was then lower than the angels. 'The world,' literally as in marg. 'the inhabited earth,' is our present world, not the world to come, as von Soden thinks. For 'bringeth in' the margin reads 'shall have brought in.'

the firstborn. The term is several times in the O. T. applied to Israel (Exod. iv. 22; Jer. xxxi. 9). It seems to have been applied to the Messiah by the Jews in the time of Christ on the ground of Ps. lxxxix. 27, and it passed over from them into the Christian Church. That the term was applied to God Himself in some Rabbinical passages we should probably regard, with Bleek, as a mere eccentricity. Philo speaks of the Logos as the firstborn Son, though he uses a slightly different word. Paul uses the same word as here in Col. i. 15, 18; Rom. viii. 29, and it also occurs in Rev. i. 5. Properly it expresses temporal priority, but from the special position accorded to the firstborn the notion of dominion came to be included in it. Its meaning here is difficult to determine, especially since, unlike the other N. T. instances, it stands by itself without any addition to fix its sense. Perhaps the leading thought is that of lordship, as the term is probably chosen for its appropriateness to the quotation which is to follow. Whether there is any comparison with angels as the later born is uncertain; but after the denial that angels have received the name of Son, it is very unlikely. There may, however, be such a comparison with men, the 'many sons' of ii. 10.

let all the angels of God worship him. This passage is not

Who maketh his angels winds,
And his ministers a flame of fire:

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found in the Hebrew Bible. In Ps. xcvii. 7 we read, 'Worship him, all ye gods,' which is translated in the LXX, 'Worship him all ye his angels.' But in the LXX version of the Song of Moses the words occur as here, though they have nothing corresponding to them in the original. An interesting point, however, needs notice. While in the *Codex Vaticanus* Deut. xxxii. 43 stands as here, in the *Codex Alexandrinus* for 'angels of God' we read 'sons of God.' Since the author usually quotes a MS. of the LXX which has affinities with the text of the latter rather than of the former codex, the question arises as to the text he followed here. As the latter codex has a second version of the Song of Moses placed after the Psalms, in which the words occur practically as here quoted, it seems best to suppose that the author quoted from it rather than from that in Deuteronomy, though some think his MS. of the LXX had a less close affinity to this codex than scholars since Bleek have generally supposed. Since he does not go behind the LXX to the Hebrew, it is not strange that he should quote a passage which is not in the original. The object of angelic worship here is clearly the Son not Yahweh as in the Song.

7. The quotation is from Ps. civ. 4, a passage which has given rise to much controversy. The LXX translation, adopted by the author, is legitimate as a rendering of the words, and has found strenuous defenders. It is difficult, however, to regard it as satisfactory. For the burden of the context is God's greatness as shewn in His manipulation of the forces of nature. The translation usually adopted is: 'Who maketh winds his messengers, the flaming fire his ministers.' This, although accepted by many Hebraists of the first rank, is opposed to the usage of the language (see Driver, *Hebrew Tenses*, § 195; Toy, *Quotations in the New Testament*, p. 207). We should therefore probably translate: 'Who maketh his messengers of winds, his ministers of flaming fire'; in other words, just as God made man out of dust, so He makes His messengers of wind and flame. This agrees with the translation in the LXX and Epistle in so far as it asserts that what is at one time God's messenger is at another one of the forces of nature. But it differs from it, in that the order of the process is reversed. The Hebrew asserts the formation of the messengers out of wind and fire, the LXX and Epistle assert the reduction of the angels to wind and fire. And the author evidently means this in its full extent, and not simply that God makes the angels assume the form now of wind, and now again of fire. Still less can we, with Toy, adopt the marginal translation

but of the Son *he saith*, 8

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

'spirits' instead of 'winds' and explain that God 'makes his angels ministering spirits, enduing them with the brightness and power of a flame of fire.' Against both it seems decisive that the contrast with the Son would lose its significance; for the quotations that follow emphasize the reign of the Son, but even more his eternity. He is the permanent in the perishing universe. And unless the author means that while the Son abides, the personality of the angels may vanish away and they may be reduced to impersonal forces, the contrast of the quotations is emptied of most of its force. It is true that Jewish theology regarded the angels as assuming the form of fire or wind as occasion required. But it also spoke of their evanescent personality, as of the angels of the fire stream, recreated every morning, and after praising God relapsing into the element from which they came.

8. In contrast to the angels' precarious tenure of existence stands the eternity of the Son's existence and reign. There is a further contrast between the royal dignity of the Son and the servile position of the angels, which, however, is left for more explicit statement to verses 13, 14. It might seem as if, in the eulogy passed on the Son for his love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, there was a tacit opposition to a non-moral or immoral rule of the angels (cf. Ps. lxxxii). But probably these words have no special bearing on the argument. The quotation is continued after 'for ever and ever,' in order to include the words 'above thy fellows.'

The quotation is taken from Ps. xlv. 6, 7. The Psalm is a wedding song, written for a king's marriage. It is regarded as post-exilic by several scholars, and as written in honour of a foreign king, though Robertson Smith still thought it easiest to date it in the time of the old monarchy (*Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, second edition, 1892, p. 439). Duhm also thinks the king is not a foreigner, but he identifies him with Aristobulus I (105–104 B. C.), in accordance with the very late dates (second and first centuries B. C.) he assigns to the majority of the Psalms. So late a date is improbable for any Psalm, doubly so for one in the first three books of the Psalter. Cheyne, who formerly identified the king with Ptolemy Philadelphus, has now surrendered this view, and regards the Psalm as Messianic, not, of course, in the N. T. sense (*The Christian Use of the Psalms*, pp. 153–158, 1899).

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. The meaning of the Hebrew text is much disputed. Four translations have been

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;

proposed: (*a*) Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; (*b*) Thy throne is God for ever and ever; (*c*) Thy throne of God is for ever and ever; (*d*) Thy throne is God's throne for ever and ever. Of these (*c*) and (*d*) seem to be grammatically inadmissible, (*b*) is harsh and unexampled, and (*a*) involves the direct address of an earthly king by the name God, which is hardly possible. The Hebrew text is probably corrupt; the simplest emendation is 'Thy throne shall be for ever and ever,' in which case the Divine name, which creates the difficulty, disappears[1]. The translation in the Epistle, which is practically that of the LXX, admits of two interpretations. We may translate as in R. V., 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,' or 'Thy throne is God for ever and ever' (so Ewald, Hort, and Westcott). Westcott explains this: 'Thy kingdom is founded upon God, the immovable Rock.' In spite of such distinguished support, this view has met with little favour (Weiss, with characteristic ignorance of English work, speaks of it as universally given up). It is so harsh as to be almost unintelligible, and it weakens the assertion of the dignity of the Son, contained in the direct address to him as God. The argument that, because it is scarcely possible that Elohim was addressed to the king in the Hebrew, there is a presumption

[1] The Psalm belongs to the so-called Elohistic Psalms (xlii–lxxxiii), in which an editor has very frequently altered the Divine name Yahweh into Elohim. He therefore substituted Elohim here for Yahweh. It is simplest to suppose that the Psalmist actually wrote the consonants Y H Y H (=yih°yeh, *shall be*) and that the editor (or an earlier scribe) misread them as Y H W H (= Yahweh). This emendation, proposed independently by Bruston and Giesebrecht, is accepted by Wellhausen and Duhm. It meets the need for a verb, which has been widely felt, and the alteration in the Hebrew is exceedingly slight. Other emendations have been proposed. Bickell thought that some words had fallen out of the text, and suggested 'As for thy throne, firm is its foundation, God has established it for ever and ever.' Cheyne accepted this in his commentary, but now thinks on metrical and exegetical grounds that the line 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever' is 'the pious ejaculation of an early reader,' and no part of the original text (*The Christian Use of the Psalms*, pp. 151, 152). Nöldeke thinks the text originally ran, 'Thy throne is for ever and ever,' and that a reader, offended that this should be said to an earthly king, inserted Elohim (O God), feeling that to him alone such language should be addressed. (The following works, in addition to the commentaries, may be consulted on the passage: Driver, *Hebrew Tenses*, § 194; Toy, *Quotations in the New Testament*, pp. 208, 209; Cheyne, *The Origin of the Psalter*, pp. 181, 182.)

Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

against this application in the LXX (Westcott) cannot control the interpretation of the passage in the Epistle. It is doubtful if the LXX translator reflected on the application of the word; he probably simply translated his text in the most obvious way. But the author of the Epistle, interpreting it Messianically, would be influenced neither by the Hebrew, of which he knew nothing, nor by the opinions of the translator, and would feel no scruples in speaking of the Son, whom he has described in such lofty language, as God. The most serious objection is that the use of God with the definite article[1] for the Son is unparalleled in the N. T., and that Philo distinguishes between God and the Logos by the addition or omission of the definite article, and therefore that the author can hardly have addressed the Son by this term. This argument would be of greater force if the writer had been using his own phraseology; but, as he is quoting, he uses language which he would probably not have chosen. We should, therefore, translate 'O God,' and regard the Son as addressed by that name. For 'thy kingdom' the two oldest Greek MSS. (ℵ and B) read His kingdom.'

9. Therefore God, thy God. Probably this is the best translation, though quite possibly the rendering 'therefore, O God, thy God' may be right.

hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness. In Ps. xlv. the reference seems to be to the joy which comes to the royal bridegroom with his bride. The anointing does not refer to his coronation, it is a metaphor from the custom of anointing guests at a feast. (Cf. 'thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over,' or the words of Jesus to Simon: 'My head with oil thou didst not anoint.') At life's banquet the king has been anointed beyond all others with the oil of joy. And, similarly here, though we can hardly think of such mystical interpretations as the marriage supper of the Lamb, or the Bridegroom's joy in the union with the church his Bride, the thought is of festal anointing, and not of coronation. We may compare 'the joy set before him,' spoken of in xii. 2.

above thy fellows. In the Psalm the king's fellows are most naturally explained as his fellow kings, not one of whom, the poet would say, has been so blest in his bride. What sense the author found in it is disputed. It is clear that he attaches a definite significance for his argument to the phrase, since he carries down the quotation to this point, quoting what is scarcely

[1] ὁ Θεός.

10 And,

Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation
of the earth,
And the heavens are the works of thy hands:

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relevant to the discussion, just for the sake of including these words. This consideration seems to exclude the reference to the anointed kings of the earth, or to the prophets, priests, and kings of the O. T., which, though not wholly irrelevant to the general argument, is so to this section of it, or to Christians in general, or to men. The argument irresistibly suggests the angels, and the objections made to it do not invalidate this interpretation. That the angels are not anointed seems to be a precarious assumption, once we remember that the anointing has nothing to do with enthronement, but is simply a metaphor for the gift of joy. The author speaks of the angels as a 'festal assembly' in xii. 23 (see note). Nor can it be said that the author could not have spoken of them as the Son's 'fellows' just when he was proving their immeasurable inferiority to him. For their inferiority is suggested here, and as heavenly beings they might be spoken of in this way. This seems to be another case where the quotation is responsible for the employment of a word which the author would hardly have chosen, even though he deliberately includes it in the citation, for the sake of the general idea. It is pressing the word beyond measure to infer from it, in the face of verse 5, that the author regarded the Son as an angel.

10. A quotation asserting that the Son has created the universe, and while it perishes he abides for ever. This further demonstration of the superiority of the Son to the angels gains greatly in significance when we remember how closely, in Jewish thought, the angels and nature were bound together. The stars had each its angel, angels presided over every force and phenomenon of nature; indeed, all things had their angels. They were conceived as the animating powers in nature, the spiritual forces resident in material things. But when heaven and earth passed away, what function was left for them? Like the tree-spirits in another mythology, who perish with the decay or destruction of their trees, so they, too, would pass away.

The quotation is taken from Ps. cii. 25-27. The Psalm is very variously dated. It is probably post-exilic, springing out of a time of national trouble. Duhm thinks it consists of two independent poems, the former ending with verse 11. The most noteworthy thing about the Greek version, in which the Epistle follows it, is that the word 'Lord' is inserted in it, though it is not found in the Hebrew. In the original Yahweh is addressed, so also in

They shall perish; but thou continuest: 11
And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;
And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up, 12

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the LXX. But owing to the Christian use of 'Lord' for Jesus, the reference of the passage to the Son was facilitated by the insertion, though without it the writer would probably have felt no hesitation in this application. Weiss thinks that since God is regarded as the speaker in the O. T., and these words are addressed to another, this other must be the Messiah. But while it is true that O. T. passages are generally regarded as spoken by God, this is not so invariably. For in some places we have the Son himself speaking (ii. 12, 13, x. 5–7), in others the Holy Spirit (iii. 7–11, x. 15–17), and in one instance a quotation is introduced with the formula, 'One hath somewhere testified, saying' (ii. 6). To assume that the author took the view of the O. T. which Weiss supposes, would be to impute to him a very unintelligent and mechanical reading of Scripture.

Thou. This word occurs at a later point of the clause in the LXX, but is placed at the beginning by the author for the sake of emphasis.

hast laid the foundation of the earth. Here the scriptural proof is given of the creation of the world by the Son, asserted in verse 2.

They shall perish; but thou continuest. 'They' probably refers, not to earth and heaven, but to 'the heavens' simply, for 'they all' in the next line naturally suggests the numerous heavens of Jewish theology, and the words 'shalt thou roll them up' can apply only to the heavens. 'Thou continuest' may also be translated, with a change of accent in the Greek, 'thou shalt continue.' But the present expresses more forcibly the *unchanging* permanence of the Son's being, and in the corresponding clause in verse 12 we have a present, 'thou art the same.' A striking parallel to this verse is found in Isa. li. 6. The following N. T. passages may be compared: Matt. xxiv. 35; 2 Pet. iii. 10–12; Rev. xx. 11, xxi. 1.

12. shalt thou roll them up. The Hebrew is 'shalt thou change them,' and this is read here by some MSS., but wrongly. It is not clear what was the original reading in the LXX. Probably the translation followed the Hebrew, but owing to the similarity of the two words in Greek, and perhaps under the influence of Isa. xxxiv. 4, 'change' was altered into 'roll up.' As we gather from that passage in Isaiah (which occurs in a late apocalyptic oracle upon Edom), and from the similar passage in Rev. vi. 13, 14, the rolling up of the heavens carried with it the destruction of the heavenly bodies, and therefore of their angels.

As a garment, and they shall be changed:
But thou art the same,
And thy years shall not fail.

The firmament was regarded as a solid expanse, stretched over the earth like a canopy, the stars being luminous points fastened upon it. As it was rolled up they fell to the earth.

As a garment. This repetition, which is not found in the LXX, is attested by a very strong combination of MSS. It is somewhat difficult and may be due to a scribe's mistake in copying.

13. A quotation, introduced by a formula similar to that in verse 5, declaring the Son's exaltation, in which no angel shares. The quotation is from Ps. cx. 1. This Psalm is probably Maccabæan, and several indications point to Simon Maccabæus as the subject of it. In 1 Macc. xiv. 41 we read: 'that the Jews and the priests were well pleased that Simon should be their leader and high priest for ever, until there should arise a faithful prophet.' Simon thus combined the positions of prince and high-priest; he was king in all but name, and issued his own coinage. But as he was not of high-priestly family the appointment was provisional, till a prophet should arise to pronounce the Divine will. Accordingly we have in Ps. cx. a prophetic oracle in which Simon's position is legitimated by the assimilation of his priesthood to that of Melchizedek. Like him, Simon was king and priest in one, and the coincidence in the phraseology of 1 Macc. xiv. 41 with the words 'thou art a high priest for ever' in the Psalm is too striking to be accidental. It is also worth noticing that the first four verses of the Psalm contain an acrostic formed by the letters of Simon's name. The lateness of the Psalm is further confirmed by the fact that Gen. xiv. is probably one of the latest sections in the Pentateuch, belonging, indeed, to none of its main documents, and possibly the Melchizedek episode is a still later insertion. It seems probable that the Psalm refers to this narrative[1]. It should

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[1] As the Psalm is so important for the argument of the Epistle, it should be added that the correctness of the text of verse 4 has been recently challenged. Duhm asserts that the Hebrew cannot mean 'after the manner of Melchizedek.' He cuts out the name Melchizedek as possibly the marginal note of a reader, intended to point out that just as Melchizedek was a true priest, though not of Aaron's line, or appointed according to the law, so might Simon be; by a slight correction he gets the sense that Simon is priest not by inheritance or foreign appointment, but by the Divine will. Cheyne thinks that as the Psalm stands, the reference to Simon as a priest after the manner of Melchizedek is intended, but that the present text is due to an editor, and that originally the reference to Simon

But of which of the angels hath he said at any time, 13
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?
Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to 14

be added, however, that Gunkel in his recent commentary on Genesis, while he regards Gen. xiv. as late, thinks that it contains some primitive elements, the mention of Melchizedek as priest-king of Jerusalem being one. He thinks further that the Davidic family may have represented themselves as his legitimate successors, continuing his dynasty, as the Cæsars represented themselves as successors of the Pharaohs. Psalm cx. he thinks, but not on strong grounds, cannot be Maccabæan, but belongs to the time of the kingdom. The lofty language of the Psalm made it natural that it should be interpreted as Messianic. This seems to have been the current Jewish view in the time of Christ, and the Psalm is frequently quoted as such in the New Testament. It is natural that, in view of the Christian use of it, the Messianic reference should have been denied by later Jews, but by no means universally even by them.

Sit thou on my right hand. In the original meaning of the prophet, the prince is invited to share in God's government, that is, probably, to act as His earthly deputy. As applied to the Son the meaning is that after his return to heaven he was bidden by his Father to sit with Him on His throne. Thus the statement at the end of verse 3 receives its scriptural warrant.

Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet? Although enthroned, opposition to him has not been completely overcome. But since God has taken it on Himself to subdue it, it cannot be permanent. The metaphor is derived from the oriental practice of putting the foot on the neck of an enemy.

14. In contrast to the victorious sovereignty of the Son, the author emphatically asserts the servile position of the angels. The accumulation of the marks of their inferiority is noteworthy. They are 'ministering spirits,' whose function is not to rule but to serve; they do not act of their own initiative but are 'sent forth'; their mission is 'to do service,' and this for the sake not of the Son simply, but of his followers, not of those who have received salvation, but those for whom it still lies in the future. And this

and the mention of Melchizedek were alike absent. The Psalm in its earlier form was strictly Messianic. This view can be judged on its merits only when the arguments are published in the promised second edition of his commentary on the Psalms. At present there seems to be no strong reason for distrusting the text.

do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?

2 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to

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is true not merely of some angels, but of 'all' without exception, even those of the loftiest dignity.

ministering spirits. This collocation is suggested by verse 7, though in English this is disguised by the necessity of translating by 'winds' in verse 7 the word here translated 'spirits.'

for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation. It is not said that angels serve Christians, but only that the service they do is for their sake. The service is rendered to God, or possibly to the Son. 'Inherit' and the cognate words occur nine times in the Epistle. The 'salvation' here spoken of is still future, and the reference seems to be to the consummation of blessedness in 'the age to come,' and not to deliverance from death in the approaching catastrophe (xii. 26). Nor is there any reason to think, with Weiss, of those who are to inherit salvation as the members of the chosen people.

ii. From the foregoing proof of the superiority of the Son to the angels the writer draws a very solemn warning. The law which was spoken by these inferior beings was enforced by strong sanctions and its transgressions visited with severe penalty. How much more severe, then, must be the punishment of those who neglect the salvation proclaimed by the Son and miraculously attested by God Himself! Weiss thinks that the superiority of Christ to the angels is a theme abandoned by the author in i. 14 and not again taken up in the Epistle. He explains the inference in verses 1-4 to follow from the unique loftiness of the Mediator of the N. T. revelation, and not from his superiority to the angels. It is difficult to believe that he can be right in this. For why have brought in the angels in the first chapter, at least with such elaborate pains to prove their inferiority to the Son, if he intended to do no more than assert the Son's incomparable dignity? Why in that case go out of his way, after he has done with the angels, to emphasize the fact that the law was spoken through them, and therefore the sanctions which enforced it were less stringent than those which enforced the gospel spoken by the Son? Why, by emphatic position in the sentence, throw stress on the fact that angels are not the lords of the world to come (verse 5) or objects of the Son's help (verse 16)? The truth is, rather, that the angels are in the author's mind to the end of the second chapter. It was just because they were so inseparable from the law, and conferred such prestige on it to minds moved by outward splendour rather than by intrinsic excellence, that the author

the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away *from them.* For if the word spoken through angels 2
proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience

was compelled to make a clean sweep of their claims, if he wished to loosen the hold of his readers on the allegiance they paid them. For it should scarcely be urged against this that verses 2, 3 would be very unsuitable to draw away the readers from the Old Covenant. This position is taken by von Soden in the interests of the view that the readers were not Jews. He supposes the argument to be simply that if fixed penalty followed disobedience to the Old Covenant, still more will neglect of the New meet with punishment. But the fact that fixed penalty followed disobedience to the law is not inconsistent with the demand that the readers should break from it now that it is superseded by a fuller revelation. It is characteristic of the writer to insert his warnings and exhortations in the course of his argument. A passage very similar to verses 1–4 is x. 26–29.

ii. 1–4. *The peril of neglecting the gospel.* Since the law spoken by the angels was so strictly enforced by penalty for transgression, how earnestly we should heed the word of the Lord, attested to us by his ear-witnesses and confirmed with miracles by God!

1. we ought. The Greek word does not suggest a moral duty but the necessary acceptance of an irresistible argument.

the things that were heard: that is, the gospel message; but it is not clear whether the precise reference is to the words spoken by the Lord and heard by the ear-witnesses, or to the words spoken by the latter to the writer and his readers.

lest haply we drift away: the verb might perhaps be better translated 'lest we be carried away.' The danger was that they should be swept from their moorings by the strong tide which was setting away from the gospel; for the addition in the R. V., 'from them,' probably correctly expresses the meaning. Their peril is that they may be carried away from what has been heard, though some think the reference is to 'salvation' rather than the gospel. Instead of 'haply,' which, he says, weakens the sense, Rendall translates 'by any chance.'

2. the word spoken through angels. This as already explained is the law (see note on i. 4).

proved stedfast: the tense in the Greek indicates that the state of things described is now obsolete. The steadfastness of the law means its validity, and therefore, as the passage proceeds to shew, its inviolable character.

transgression and disobedience. The former means the breaking of a positive enactment, the latter often bears practically

3 received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed

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the same sense, but suggests the inward temper of unwillingness to hear, which is manifested in the outward act. It is probable that the writer has specially in mind the disobedience of the Israelites in the wilderness, of which he speaks more fully later.

3. if we neglect so great salvation. If transgression of the law inevitably met with the exact penalty it deserved, how could Christians hope to escape if they slighted so great a salvation as that which their religion offered them? How great it is he takes pains to shew by gathering together the marks of dignity and authenticity attaching to its proclamation. While he describes the law merely as a word spoken by angels, the gospel is said to have been spoken by the Lord, attested by those who heard it, and miraculously confirmed by God.

which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard. 'Which' scarcely brings out the force of the Greek; 'inasmuch as it' gives the sense. It is possible to translate 'inasmuch as it was confirmed to us by them that heard as having been spoken through the Lord from the first' (or 'as first spoken through the Lord'), but the R. V. translation is much more natural. It asserts two facts: that the gospel took its origin in the teaching of the Lord, and that it was attested to the writer and his readers by ear-witnesses. The writer uses this title of the Son, because it emphasized the dignity of the Speaker and thus the weightiness of his message. The title suggests the guarantee, given by the Speaker's exaltation, of the word he had spoken on earth. The salvation thus proclaimed was attested by the hearers to the writer and his readers. In other words, neither the writer nor the readers had heard Jesus himself, but depended for their knowledge of salvation on others. The words definitely exclude the authorship of the Epistle by Paul, since he asserted the direct revelation of his gospel from the Lord himself, and its independence of the authority of the Jerusalem apostles. The verse has further an important bearing on the question of the destination of the Epistle. Von Soden has revived the view that 'confirmed unto us' should be rather explained 'held fast to our time.' But this is not only a very dubious interpretation of the Greek, but not so suitable in the context, which, as the following words indicate, is concerned with the attestation that has been given to the gospel which the readers received. Mr. Welch bases his main argument for the view that Peter wrote this Epistle on the correspondence he finds between this verse and John i. 35-42. He thinks 'those who

unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness 4
with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold
powers, and by gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his
own will.

For not unto angels did he subject the world to come, 5

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heard' the Lord were Andrew and John, and that by 'us' Peter and his godly companions are meant. The correspondence is not very exact. The narrative in John represents only one of the two as finding Peter, it says nothing of any confirmation by Andrew of the message spoken by the Lord, but simply quotes his declaration 'We have found the Messiah,' and the 'godly companions' are not mentioned at all. Further, Mr. Welch gives to the word 'confirmed' the sense that conjectures formed by Peter and others as to the Messianic character of Jesus had been confirmed by the Lord, and that these conjectures had taken their rise in the words of the Baptist about the Lamb of God. But if so, the salvation was first spoken by the Baptist, then confirmed by Christ himself. To tie down the very general expressions of this verse to a private conversation of Jesus with Andrew and John, and their telling of the news to their companions, is also contrary to the immediate impression made by the words, and could only be justified if that impression yielded an otherwise unsatisfactory sense. Had Peter been the author, is it credible that he would have spoken of confirmation of the gospel to himself through others, and have omitted to mention the vital fact that he was constantly with the Lord through his ministry? Could he have hit upon a form of words which seemed to say more explicitly that he had received the gospel at second-hand?

4. God added His testimony to that of Jesus and his hearers. The verse is important as shewing how fully the writer felt himself warranted in appealing to miracles as a Divine witness to the apostolic preaching: cf. Rom. xv. 18, 19. The combination 'signs and wonders' is very common in the N. T. The former is a favourite word of John, who uses it to draw attention to the inner spiritual significance of the physical miracles of Jesus. The latter nowhere occurs by itself in the N. T. The 'powers' are those which found expression in the signs and wonders. They varied as they were the sources of various kinds of miracle. 'Gifts' means literally 'distributions' (marg.). The Holy Spirit is regarded as distributed in various functions. The distribution is according to God's will. Some, though less naturally, connect 'according to his own will' with 'was confirmed.'

ii. 5–18. *The sufferings of Jesus and their issue.* Man and not the angels is lord of the world to come. We do not see this

as yet, but, as its pledge, we do see Jesus crowned in virtue of the death he suffered for all. Suffering was a needful discipline to fit him to be the leader of men, and to give him that identity of experience with his brethren which should qualify him to be their high-priest and sympathetically help them in their temptations.

This section presents great difficulties. Its connexion with what precedes is not quite clear. Weiss takes it to be that God confirmed the faith of the hearers through signs (verse 4), since the world to come is not subject to angels, and therefore in it matters do not take place with unfailing necessity, so that faith may waver and need support. This thought of the angels as organs of the irresistible Divine government is simply read into the words, and its far-fetched character shews how futile is the attempt to eliminate the angels from the subject-matter of this section; and the point of connexion which it finds in the preceding context, the confirmation through signs, is altogether too slight. This verse is rather the ground for the whole exhortation in verses 1–4. Since the world to come is not subject to the angels, it is not to their word that we must give heed, but to that spoken by the Lord and enforced by so much severer penalties. The full force of the verse is not grasped unless we read into it what has been said in the first chapter of the inferiority of the angels to the Son. But the verse looks forward as well as backward, and introduces a fresh stage in the argument. There is a double contrast latent in it, which may be thus stated: (*a*) It is this world, and not the world to come, which is subject to the angels; (*b*) the world to come is subject, not to angels, but to man. The former contrast was familiar to Jewish thought, and, though not explicitly asserted, is apparently assumed as common ground. Hints of it are to be found in the ascription of the law-giving to them and the emphasis on the fact that man is made lower than the angels. The second contrast is developed more fully, and in such a way that the author is enabled to turn the edge of the objection derived from the humiliation of Jesus. This humiliation was inevitable for various reasons. If the Son came into this world at all, he must assume the position of a subject, not of a ruler; he must be made lower than the angels. Just as he cannot be a high-priest on earth (viii. 4), so he cannot be a king. Further, if he was to help men, subject to angels, in bondage to the fear of death inflicted by the devil, he must share their evil lot. And this supplies the answer to another question. Since we live in this world and not in the world to come, are we not as a matter of fact *still* subject to angels? No; for we live ideally in the world to come, we belong to it in principle, and are there freed from the angelic yoke. True, this has not yet been visibly realized ('we see not yet'), but it is virtually accomplished ('we see

whereof we speak. But one hath somewhere testified, 6
saying,

Jesus crowned'). Even though we have our outward life in this world, we do not really belong to it; angels and law, death and devil, have lost their hold upon us. For since Jesus is our Brother and our Captain, what he has won has been won for us as well as for himself, and therefore his coronation is the pledge of ours.

5. not unto angels. The emphatic position of the words is noteworthy as shewing that the verse is no formula of polite dismissal (as Bruce supposes). The article is omitted because, as in i. 2, the stress lies upon *what* rather than on *who* they are.

did he subject. The reference is probably, as in i. 2 ('appointed'), to the eternal decree of God.

the world to come. As the margin points out, the word translated 'world' means 'the inhabited earth.' It is a different word from that translated 'worlds' in i. 2 and 'age' in vi. 5. The 'age to come' and the 'world to come' are essentially the same, though regarded from different points of view. The 'world to come' is the new order of things, moral and spiritual, brought in by Christ, but always pressing forward to fuller manifestation and receiving consummation at his coming. It corresponds to the Kingdom of God. By adding the words 'whereof we speak' the author shews how fundamental to him is the contrast of this world and the world to come. The latter is the subject of the whole Epistle.

6–8. The quotation is taken from Ps. viii. 4–6. This Psalm seems to rest upon Gen. i, and is therefore probably post-exilic. The writer, impressed with the glory of God as seen in the starry heavens, marvels at the gracious care He manifests for so frail a creature as man and the godlike dignity to which He has appointed him. The thought of the Psalmist is transformed in the Epistle. The Psalmist is speaking of man's present dominion, and indicates his lofty position in the words 'thou hast made him but little lower than Elohim.' This high dignity is further described in the words 'thou hast crowned him with glory and honour.' In the Epistle the clauses 'but little lower than Elohim' and 'crowned with glory and honour,' which are synonymous in the Psalm, become a pair of contrasts, relating respectively to man's present position and his future destiny. The LXX translated 'Elohim,' not 'God' but 'angels,' and in the main rightly, since the Psalmist can scarcely have thought of man as but little inferior to God Himself. It is also probable, though this is disputed, that the words expressing the degree of inferiority in the Psalm were by the author interpreted as expressing its temporary

What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

character. A very difficult question arises as to the reference given by the author to the quotation. Does the writer apply it to Jesus or to man? Many of the best modern commentators take the former view, on the ground that the definite application of the words to Jesus in verse 9 fixes the reference to him, and that the contrast throughout is between Jesus and the angels. It is better, however, to refer the quotation to man. For the words 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him?' can scarcely have been applied to Jesus, since surprise at God's care for His own Son would be singularly out of place, and hardly, as Weiss thinks, justified by the low estate of the Messiah on earth. Further, the contrast between what we see and what we do not see favours this interpretation. We do not see all things subjected to man, but we do see Jesus crowned with glory and honour. And the introduction of 'Jesus' in verse 9 as 'him who hath been made a little lower than the angels' is really for the purpose of distinguishing him from 'man' and 'the son of man' in verse 6. For the underlying thought of the whole section ii. 5–18 is the identification of Jesus with mankind. Man has to pass through certain experiences, and therefore Jesus, since he is the Captain of humanity, must endure them also. But just because he is one with it in its tragic lot, it will be one with him in his glorious destiny. The line of thought is therefore this: It is not the angels who are rulers of the world to come, but man. For Scripture, while it recognizes man's present position as one of inferiority to the angels, yet treats that inferiority as only temporary, and assigns to him a universal dominion. It is true that we do not yet see man crowned lord of the universe. But we do see Jesus, who shared his temporary inferiority to the angels, already crowned, and we know that this is the guarantee of the coronation of the race; for he passed to the crown through suffering and death, which he endured for every man, and thus achieved, by sharing in the universal lot, a universal redemption.

6. But one hath somewhere testified. This is the only quotation in the Epistle assigned to the human author. As the words are addressed to God, He could not so well be regarded as the speaker, though in i. 8, 9 and 10–12 similar passages are quoted as addressed by God to the Son, and in this case the quotation might have been placed in the mouth of the Son as in verses 12, 13 or x. 5–7. The indefinite formula is found also in Philo. Perhaps it would be better to substitute 'we know' for 'somewhere.' In any case we must not suppose that the writer speaks thus because he did not remember where the passage occurred.

What is man, &c. Several explain this to mean How great is man that thou shouldest be so mindful of him? But more probably

Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?
Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; 7
Thou crownedst him with glory and honour,
And didst set him over the works of thy hands:
Thou didst put all things in subjection under his 8
feet.
For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left

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the writer, in accordance with the sense of the Psalm, means How insignificant is man! For it is an expression of surprise at God's amazing condescension. Man—a part of nature and, compared with the glittering hosts of heaven, so insignificant a part—subject to the angels, the rulers of nature! What is the secret of God's loving care for him? It is that this lowly position is only for a time; for him is reserved the dominion now held by the angels.

the son of man. There is no definite article in the Greek, so that the Messianic reference, which is suggested by the English translation, is absent from the passage.

7. a little lower. This translation, which is also the meaning of the Hebrew, is accepted by several scholars, but that in the margin, 'for a little while lower,' is more probable. For the assertion of the slightness of the inferiority has no place in the argument, whereas the assertion of its brevity is a real point, since it looks forward to its speedy termination. Nor is this inapplicable to man, since the whole period of his humiliation is brief indeed compared with the period of glory that awaits him.

And didst set him over the works of thy hands. This clause, though found in many good MSS., should probably be omitted. It is wanting in our best MS., and its insertion is easily accounted for by the wish to make the quotation conform exactly to the original.

8. The author presses the 'all things' of the Psalmist to mean that no single thing is left unsubjected to man. And while he thinks of the material universe, it is scarcely likely that so emphatic an expression can be limited to it. He does not *say* the angels are made subject to man, but he means it. Angels were intimately nnected with the universe and its phenomena, and the subjection ne involves that of the other. Paul is more explicit in his ent on the passage. He mentions the putting down of all uthority, and power, by which he meant the various orders gels. He connected with this the abolition of death, a thought ch also recurs in this passage, though somewhat differently treated. If we do not include angels here we weaken the emphasis and blunt the edge of the argument.

nothing that is not subject to him. But now we see not
9 yet all things subjected to him. But we behold him

But now we see not yet. The two adverbs of time, 'now,' 'not yet,' while calling attention to the present state of things, strongly suggest that it will be reversed in the near future. The danger of the readers was to argue, We do not and therefore we never shall see this prophecy fulfilled (cf. iii. 6, 12, iv. 1, 11, x. 23, 35). The writer suggests that the future is not to be judged by the disappointing present. For what they do see already (verse 9) should give them confidence. The reign of the angels is virtually ended; Jesus has been crowned in their stead, and this coronation guarantees man's ultimate dominion. For he has shared our humiliation, and his glory is the prelude of ours.

9. The most natural explanation of this extremely difficult verse, if we take account simply of the order, yields the thought that Jesus was crowned with glory and honour in order that he might die for every man. This view seems, however, to have been first put forward by Hofmann, and, although defended by Matheson, Rendall, and Milligan, and especially by Bruce, has found little favour. Hofmann takes the words 'because of the suffering of death' to mean since *men* had to suffer death. He explains the passage thus: Because men are subject to death, Jesus was raised in life to a position of dominion over all things, in order that his death might result in good for all. This reference to man's subjection to death finds support in verses 14, 15, but verse 10 favours, perhaps we should say compels, the reference, which is also more obvious in itself, to Christ's suffering of death. For the 'sufferings' in verse 10 are those of Christ, and the emphasis is not so much on suffering as something to be done away with as on suffering as a necessary stage on the road to glory. The difficulty of the readers was not with the suffering of mankind—that they took for granted—but with the Messiah's suffering of death. And if this exaltation is during lifetime it scarcely suits 'made . . . lower than the angels.' Rendall's reference to a crowning in the pre-incarnate state, in order that he might sacrifice the more, is not open to this difficulty. Bruce takes the glory to consist in the fact that the death, which would be a humiliation in itself, is freely undergone for the sake of others. Davidson's objection that this idea is modern, and that Scripture has not permitted itself the paradox of speaking of the death as a glory, would be more forcible if Scripture were more homogeneous. There seems to be no reason why such a thought should appear strange in the Epistle of the humiliation. It is not necessary to combine Hofmann's strained view of the words 'on account of the suffering of death' with the view that the crowning is prior to the death. The usual inter-

who hath been made a little lower than the angels, *even* Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with

pretation is that the crowning with glory and honour is subsequent to the death. It must be granted that this is not the most natural explanation of the Greek. We may suppose that the clause expressing the purpose 'that by the grace of God,' &c., is somewhat loosely appended to express the thought that the purpose of the humiliation and death was to make the scope of that death universal. Or we may connect the clause with the words 'crowned with glory and honour,' and extract the sense that the exaltation of Jesus was with a view to make the death he had undergone of universal efficacy; this would require the translation 'that he should have tasted,' which is, grammatically, rather uncertain. Or we might supply in thought the words 'death which he suffered' before 'that . . . he should taste.' This is probably the best expedient. The difficulty is largely caused by the placing of the words 'because of the suffering of death' before the words 'crowned with glory and honour.' If the present order were reversed, no difficulty would be felt. The writer probably meant this sense, but inverted the order to throw emphasis on the words 'because of the suffering of death,' and thus created a difficulty by bringing the clauses 'crowned with glory and honour' and 'that he might taste of death' into apparent connexion.

In spite of the real difficulties which are involved in the view that the coronation is later than the death, it seems best to adhere to it. For verse 10 gives the reason for verse 9, and since the suffering of Jesus there issues in his perfecting, which seems to be identical with the glory to which he leads his followers, it is most natural to think that in verse 9 the suffering issues in the crowning with glory, and not vice versa. And what is even more decisive is the requirement of the argument. In verse 8 the author admits that now we see not yet all things subjected to man. This verse points to something we do see now, which is a pledge of the subjection of the universe to man that we are to see. This something is Jesus crowned. The glory and honour with which he is crowned must therefore be of the nature of dominion, otherwise it is no pledge of man's ultimate dominion. It must accordingly be explained of his exaltation to the right hand of God. His reign, it is true, is not undisputed, he waits till his enemies are subdued; but it is sufficiently established to form a guarantee for the complete fulfilment of his destiny and man's.

we behold. That is, in all the glorious sequel of his death. The change from 'see' (verse 8) to 'behold' is probably intentional, and the latter word perhaps carries us into the realm of the invisible, where faith is the organ of vision.

Jesus. The author gives a narrower definition to man made

glory and honour, that by the grace of God he should

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lower than the angels than that intended in verses 6, 7. He does so, first to identify Jesus with mankind in its humiliation, next to indicate that the crowning has been as yet realized in his case alone, and lastly to suggest that while we do not yet see man crowned, the crowning of Jesus assures us that we shall see it. The human name is used here because it was in his human life that the Son was made lower than the angels, and the crowning of the man Jesus is a prophecy of the crowning of mankind.

because of the suffering of death. These words cannot be connected with 'made . . . lower than the angels,' in the sense that this humiliation was necessary in order that he might die, for the order of the Greek excludes this. They are connected with 'crowned,' and the meaning is that the crowning of Jesus was the reward for his suffering. We may compare xii. 2, but especially Phil. ii. 6–11.

crowned with glory and honour. This cannot be identified with having all things made subject to him, for his enemies are as yet unsubdued, but the process has already begun which is to culminate in his unchallenged rule. 1 Cor. xv. 24–28 seems to be in the author's mind. In that passage Paul speaks of Christ as reigning 'till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.'

by the grace of God: that is, by the favour which God extended to mankind Christ died for all. Bruce's view, that God's favour to Jesus in granting to him to die for humanity is meant, may be held with the view that the suffering precedes the crowning, but is improbable. A very interesting reading 'without God' is mentioned by Origen and several Fathers; it found considerable acceptance, though it has now very little MS. attestation. It has been variously explained: he died for all except God; he died forsaken by God; he died apart from his Divine nature. It is strange that a textual critic so eminent as Weiss should adopt it. He explains it to refer to the cry, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But this seems to have no place in the argument. The interpretation 'apart from his Divine nature' would require different Greek. That God was excluded from the number of those for whom he died was too obvious to need to be stated. It is quite possible that a reader wrote on the margin 'except God,' to express this thought, of which he was reminded by 1 Cor. xv. 27, which occurs in a passage closely akin to this. It is still more probable that originally it was a comment on verse 8, which is partly parallel to 1 Cor. xv. 27. A scribe then thinking this to be a correction for 'by the grace of God'—the two readings being similar in Greek—substituted it. It may be due to a mistake in copying. It was made use of by the Nestorians, who exaggerated

taste death for every *man*. For it became him, for 10

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the distinction of the Divine and human natures in Christ into a distinction of Persons, and therefore emphasized the non-participation of the Son in the death of Jesus.

taste death. This does not mean that Christ's experience of death was very brief, that he just tasted it and no more, since he rose again so soon, but rather that he drank the cup, tasting all the flavour of its varied bitterness. Several think the phrase is a mere variation for 'die,' but even in those passages where it seems to be so used, the suggestion of death's bitterness is probably present.

for every man. The Greek may be either masculine, as the English version takes it, or neuter 'for everything.' Probably it is the former, because the context speaks of the redemption by which man achieves his destiny. The meaning is, therefore, that Jesus died for the whole human race. It is surely mere riding of a hobby to death when Weiss denies that there is any expression of universalism here, on the ground that in verse 16 it is said that Christ 'layeth hold of the seed of Abraham,' and that the author can mean here only such as belong to it. He fully accepts the universalism of Paul, though he usually restricts his exposition of Christ's work to its relation to Israel.

10. The author has now brought his argument to a point where he can safely speak of the sufferings of Jesus. He has expounded his Divine dignity, his exaltation above the angels, his coronation through death which he had tasted for all mankind. He brings Jesus into connexion with inferiority to the angels, with suffering and death, for the first time in verse 9. This was keenly felt by the readers to be a degradation to him. For them the Divine was the splendid and mighty, not the sordid life of labour and the infamy of the cross. With patient tenderness for the intellectual and moral weakness, which later he sternly rebukes, the writer makes it clear to them that he finds in Jesus all those qualities which constitute true greatness for them. But the earthly experiences of Jesus do not diminish his glory, they rather minister to it. So in verse 9 he mentions the suffering and death, emphasizing first that they form the path by which Jesus gains his glory, and secondly that they are of universal efficacy for mankind, and thirdly that they spring directly out of the grace of God. He has thus very skilfully tried to place them at a point of view from which the death of Christ may seem worthier than they had deemed it. In this verse he asserts that behind this suffering of Jesus lay the action of God, and that this action was wholly worthy of him. The verse has other points of contact with verse 9, but it is specially connected with 'by the grace of God.' The author attributes the death of Jesus to the grace of God, and

whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of

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thus vindicates the fitness of the Divine action. It is noteworthy that the act which so befits God is one which reveals His grace.

it became him: was worthy alike of His character and His wisdom. The word occurs several times in Philo in relation to God.

for whom are all things, and through whom are all things. The use of this expression instead of 'God' is significant. It assures the readers that the standard by which the writer judges the fitness of action for God is not unworthy. He is the Creator of the universe and for His sake the universe exists. But further it indicates that the writer is as conscious as the readers of the infinite resources of strength and wisdom that are at God's disposal, and yet believes that suffering has been a worthy method for God to pursue. But the thought is also suggested that God owes it to Himself, since all things are for Him, to lead the universe without failure to its destined consummation. The bringing of the Son to glory is a special part of this universal process, and is an end worthy of God. The emphasis of the verse, however, lies on the fitness of the means rather than of the end, unless with Rendall we translate 'to bring many sons unto glory and to make,' &c.

in bringing many sons unto glory. This gives the deepest reason why the action of God was so worthy of Him. Those whom He led to glory were His sons, and therefore no process was too painful for their deliverance, or too humiliating for Him to adopt, even though it meant the Incarnation and suffering of the Son. It is doubtful whether those are right who explain 'sons' to mean 'believers.' It is more natural to think of the universal sonship possessed by all men, since a narrower sense than this is out of harmony with the universalist tendency of the passage. God's action is due to the fact that they are sons; they do not become sons for the first time in consequence of His action, though they do become sons in a higher sense. 'Many' is intended to lay stress on the large number; the question whether this 'many' means 'all' is clearly not in the writer's mind. The word 'bringing' is difficult on account of the tense in the Greek. We may set aside the view that it is Christ who brings the sons to glory, and assume that it is God. Some translate 'who had brought' (marg. 'having brought'), and explain that just as the O. T. saints had been already brought to glory, so it was fitting for Jesus to be brought through sufferings. But Jesus could hardly be spoken of as the leader of their salvation. If we translate 'who had brought,' we must explain it of the eternal purpose of God. It is more natural to translate 'while he brought,'

their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he 11

in which case the bringing of the sons to glory is thought of as simultaneous with the perfecting of the leader. It is so in idea, since it is included in it, though not in realization. The goal for the sons is 'glory,' that is, the position already gained by the Son (verse 9).

to make . . . perfect. This with its cognate words is very characteristic of the Epistle. It means to make complete, to bring to a goal, to bring to maturity or perfection. It is the 'note' of Christianity that it brings to perfection, while the law could make nothing perfect. Rendall has revived the view of Calvin and many of the older commentators that the word means 'to consecrate.' But this is improbable, for it is not easy to assign this sense everywhere, and it is not clear that the word has this meaning. There is no exclusive reference here to the high-priesthood of Christ. The perfection is perfection in leadership. This idea is very comprehensive and embraces the process and the goal. Whatever contributed to his perfecting as leader in salvation is included in it. The process involves all that varied human experience which qualified him to be a captain of his fellows. The special qualification gained through suffering is sympathy, the fellow feeling which grows out of identity in experience. He could not be perfect in sympathy unless he endured the sorrows and temptations of men. So far as this implied moral progress, so far that idea also is present in the word. This does not mean that he was ever morally imperfect for the stage of life at which he had arrived, but that as each day brought with it new experiences, he turned them into opportunities for deepening and widening his moral education, always rising to meet the demand as it arose. He thus learned obedience and was made perfect (v. 8, 9). The idea of consecration to the priestly office need not be excluded, for sympathy gained through a common experience is necessary to this. The word, however, includes not only the process but the result. Comparison with verse 9 makes it clear that the author thought of the crowning with glory and honour as the climax of the perfecting. The leader must not only share the hardships of his followers, but he must successfully reach the end of the journey. The goal for the 'many sons' is 'glory,' as already asserted in the quotation from Ps. viii, and to this glory Jesus must lead the way.

the author of their salvation. It would have been better to retain the A. V. translation 'captain' (so marg.). The word means leader, and it expresses several ideas. Jesus shares the lot of his followers; he is the pioneer who opens up a new way; what he does he does both for himself and his followers. The word prepares the way for the later comparison with Moses and

that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them
12 brethren, saying,

Joshua. The sense implied in 'author' may also be present. In verses 8 and 9 we have a passage closely parallel to this, where Jesus is spoken of as the cause of eternal salvation to all that obey him. In xii. 2 he is referred to as the leader and perfecter of faith, who endured the cross.

through sufferings: because they constitute alike his training in leadership, and the means of redemption in which his leadership attains its end.

11. This verse attaches itself to 'many sons' in verse 10, but is not merely a justification of that title. For the argument is not: I call them sons of God for they are the brethren of God's Son, but rather, Since the sons have to pass through suffering, it was fit for their leader to share their lot, inasmuch as he and they spring from a common Father.

he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified: that is, Christ and Christians. The word 'sanctify' means to 'consecrate,' to set apart for God's service. It is not primarily an ethical term.

are all of one: are all sons of one parent. The word might be neuter, but is more probably masculine. The one Parent is God. The view that Abraham is referred to, while finding support in verse 16, limits the author's outlook unduly, and while the reference to Adam escapes that objection, it has no support in the context. Both views are excluded by the fact that the 'many sons' of verse 10 are sons of God, and therefore, unless expressly guarded against by some definite indication to the contrary, God must be meant here, and still more by the important fact that the Son becomes man because he is already man's brother, and his brotherhood does not depend on a *human* descent from a common parent. It might seem that the spiritual Fatherhood is meant here, since there is a special reference to those who are sanctified. It appears to be true that this verse speaks only of those who are children of God in a spiritual sense. Nevertheless the wider meaning seems to be present in verses 14, 15; and the restriction to the regenerate does not suit the case of the Sanctifier. Probably we should explain 'of one' to refer to the universal Fatherhood of God, the Father of spirits.

he is not ashamed to call them brethren. He gives them this name in the passages quoted in verses 12, 13. Although he is so far above them, as the eternal Son, he does not blush to own these 'poor relations' as his brothers.

12. The quotation is from Ps. xxii. 22, the Psalm from which the cry 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' is taken.

I will declare thy name unto my brethren,
In the midst of the congregation will I sing thy
praise.
And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, 13
Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.
Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, 14

It was regarded by the early church as Messianic. A sufferer, the victim of terrible persecution, appeals to God to deliver him, and in the assurance that He will answer his prayer utters the words here quoted. It is not clear whether the speaker is Israel (the Servant of Yahweh) or an individual. The Psalm is in any case probably post-exilic. It is quite possible that Duhm and Cheyne are right in thinking that verses 22–31 originally had no connexion with verses 1–21. But the author of the Epistle may have seen a special fitness for his argument in the praise for deliverance after sufferings.

thy name. The name of God expresses His essential character. The special thought is of God as Deliverer, who leads through suffering to glory.

In the midst of the congregation (marg. 'church'). The Son is represented as joining with his brethren, as one of themselves, in declaring God's praise.

13. The two quotations come from the same passage, Isa. viii. 17, 18. In face of the unbelief of his people, the prophet expresses his own confidence in God, and speaks of himself and his children as signs and omens in Israel. They were so because of their symbolical names. Isaiah means 'salvation of Yahweh'; Shear-Yashub, 'a remnant shall return'; and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, 'spoil speedeth, prey hasteth.' The author of the Epistle by stopping short in the second quotation elicits the sense that believers are children of God, who stand in close relationship to Christ. The 'children,' according to the context, are the children of God, though, if the passage stood alone, we should think of them more naturally as children of the Messiah. The point of the first quotation is that Jesus, like all his brethren, shews a *human* trust in God.

14, 15. The author proceeds to show why the Son must assume flesh and blood. It was because the 'children' shared in them. As such they were of corruptible nature, liable to death and in bondage to the fear of it. To become capable of death he must assume their nature. He meets death on its own ground. He comes to their help because he is already their brother; he does not become their brother by partaking of their flesh and blood. It is not made clear in the passage how the writer con-

he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that

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ceived the death of Christ to effect the results attributed to it. The most obvious suggestion is that, since his death was an atonement for sin, death, which is sin's consequence, had its power broken, and the terror which it inspired in the guilty could not affect those whose consciences were cleansed. It is doubtful whether this chain of ideas was in the writer's mind. We should understand him better if the allusion to the devil were clearer. This may belong to a circle of ideas as to which we are imperfectly informed. In Job the Satan, who must not be identified with the devil of the New Testament, inflicts disaster, death, and disease, though only by explicit Divine permission. And Jesus speaks of the woman 'whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years.' Perhaps the author attributed a more extended power over death to the devil than commentators have been willing to admit. If the passage means that the devil had the power of inflicting death, and lost it by inflicting it on Jesus, whom as the Sinless One he had no right to slay, we should have a train of thought similar to that *underlying the theory* that the death of Christ was a ransom paid to the devil (not, of course to the theory itself). The devil seems to hold much the same place here as that held by the law (or perhaps sin) in 1 Cor. xv. 56. Possibly no more may be meant than that he uses death to make men unhappy through fear. If we are to seek any other meaning for deliverance from the fear of death than that mentioned above, it might be either that Jesus has gone through death and come back into the world through the resurrection, or that through his experience of this supreme trial he has gained the sympathy which enables him effectually to help his brethren in this as in temptation. The latter is the more probable, for it harmonizes with one of the leading thoughts of this section, and the resurrection, while mentioned in xiii. 20 and perhaps v. 7, seems to have held no prominent place in the writer's thought.

14. the children: children of God and therefore already brothers of the Son, with the claim of kinship upon him.

flesh and blood. The order in the original is 'blood and flesh,' as in Eph. vi. 12. It is not clear that the change from the usual order is significant. Flesh and blood is a term for human nature on its weak and perishable side.

partook. There is a noteworthy change in the word and the tense from that used of men's participation in flesh and blood. The latter expresses the fact that men share in common, in virtue of the constitution of their being; the former that the Son assumed this perishable nature at a definite point in his history, and for a period now past.

through death he might bring to nought him that had
the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver 15
all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime
subject to bondage. For verily not of angels doth he 16

through death. He does not say through his death, because the stress lies on the fact that the devil and the fear of death have been overcome by turning their own weapon against themselves, rather than on the fact that this death was the death of the Son.

might bring to nought (marg. 'may,' so also in verse 15): that is, 'render powerless' rather than 'destroy.' The sceptre the devil has wielded is struck from his hands. Death is not yet done away with but it has ceased to be the devil's instrument.

him that had the power of death (marg. 'hath'). This is often explained as meaning merely that the devil rules in the realm of death. But this seems to weaken the language of its force. The writer apparently regards the devil as possessing at least a limited power of inflicting death, and if the contemporary beliefs about Sammael, the angel of death, who was identified with the devil, were better known to us, this passage might be clearer. It is an unnecessary restriction to translate 'the power of that death' (Rendall), in the sense that the devil had the power to inflict death on Christ. It is possible to translate 'him that had the power possessed by death.'

15. Since the human race as a whole, and not merely the seed of Abraham, was in bondage through the fear of death, it is clear that the author regarded the scope of Christ's work as universal, and not as confined to Israel. In 1 Cor. xv. 55–57 Paul expresses the same sense of triumph at the Christian victory over the fear of death. The contrast between the pre-Christian and the Christian attitude to death is too well known to need illustration.

16. He does not, as we know, take hold of angels in order to help them, for had he done so an Incarnation would have been unnecessary. They are not creatures of flesh and blood, they do not die as men do, and are not in bondage to the fear of death. It scarcely seems correct to say, with Bruce, that this verse has no connexion with the argument, but is an indication of the startling ignorance of the readers as to elementary Christian doctrine in that the writer had to explain that the Son did not take hold of angels. The emphatic way in which they are introduced suggests something more than this. Since it is men, and not the angels, who are his brethren, it is men whom the Son helps. And 'not of angels' carries us back to 'not unto angels' in verse 5. Since man, and not the angels, is lord of the world to come, it is with man that the Son must make common cause.

take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham.
17 Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like

For verily: *or* 'for as we know,' introducing a statement of which his readers need to be reminded, but which they should readily accept.

doth he take hold: that is, in order to help. This translation, which is now universally accepted, was first put forward by Sebastian Castellio in his Latin translation of the Bible (1551). Till that time it was always interpreted, as in the A. V., 'he taketh on him the nature of.' Beza, who disliked Castellio, after explaining the passage in the usual way, and pointing out its importance as a proof-text for the union of the two natures, proceeds: 'So much the more is Castellio's audacity to be execrated, who translates *succours*.' What rouses Beza's special ire is the loss of a good proof-text. It is possible to explain the verse, with Schulz, 'not of angels does death lay hold'; but this is not at all likely, for the subject in the two preceding and subsequent verses is the Son, and therefore here also.

the seed of Abraham. This is explained by many in a spiritual sense, and this interpretation has assumed fresh importance, in view of the theory that the readers were Gentiles. Von Soden, who takes this view, thinks that the expression proves nothing as to the Jewish nationality of the readers, but was chosen to introduce the idea of the high-priest and claim fulfilment of the prophecies. But the reference to the spiritual Israel is improbable. For the seed of Abraham is not what Christ created (as he did the spiritual Israel), but what he came to help, already needing such help when he came, and therefore not the Christian Church. Nor even the spiritual kernel of the nation; for the reference to flesh and blood, to the necessity of death, and emancipation from bondage to the dread of it, shew clearly that it is a physical sense that must be put on the term. The 'seed of Abraham' is therefore the Hebrew race. If so, we have a Hebrew writing to Hebrews, and thus leaving the Gentiles out of sight, though fully holding the universalism of Paul. One can hardly think of Paul expressing himself in this way. The author may have wished to impart a warmer personal tone to his words, as Bruce suggests. He paraphrases the verse: 'Christ took in hand to save, not angels, but yourselves, my Hebrew brethren.'

17. The author emphasizes the moral obligation resting on the Son to be made fully man, in order that he might adequately represent mankind as its High-Priest. The conception of Christ as High-Priest is not developed at this point, it is simply mentioned here and in iii. 1, to be taken up again in iv. 14. The writer similarly mentions Melchizedek in v. 6, 10, but does not elaborate

unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he 18

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his argument till the seventh chapter. He shews a teacher's skill in arousing interest and curiosity before he satisfies it, and in preparing the way for his new ideas.

it behoved him. Standing in such a relation to his brethren, it was a duty he owed to them to be made in all points like them. Of God's action the writer says 'it became him' (verse 10).

in all things to be made like unto his brethren. It is important to observe the emphasis which the author lays on the unimpaired humanity and full human experience of Jesus (iv. 15, v. 7, 8). Temptation, suffering, and death are chiefly in his mind. It is disputed whether we should take 'to be made like' as expressing the notion of complete resemblance, or resemblance involving difference. It is true that there is a difference—that of his sinlessness (iv. 15)—but it is questionable if that is in view here.

a merciful and faithful high priest: why he must be 'merciful' is more fully explained in v. 2, 3. His 'faithfulness' is referred to again in iii. 2, 6. His trustworthiness as our representative depends on his similarity to us in all points except sin. The efficacy of the priest's work depends on his *moral* quality as a representative of the people. Only one who shares their characteristics and experiences, and has a true sympathy with them, can be their priest. The question when Christ became a High-Priest arises at a later stage of the exposition.

in things pertaining to God indicates the sphere in which his high-priestly activity is exercised, that of man's relations to God, and not of prerogative towards man.

to make propitiation for. The tense suggests a continual process, not an act performed once for all. The word means to expiate, or to procure forgiveness for. While heathen writers speak of propitiating God, such a phrase is unknown to Scripture. The object of the action expressed by the verb is no longer God but the sins which prevent God from manifesting His favour.

the people. See note on 'the seed of Abraham' (verse 16).

18. It is noteworthy how prominent a place the sufferings of Christ, and especially his temptations, have in this Epistle. The readers seem to have found them a hindrance to belief in him. The author regards them on the contrary as a necessary part of his work, and here points out that his present ability to help the tempted depends on his past experience of temptation.

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted. This is a difficult passage. 'In that' means 'inasmuch as,' 'because,'

himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

3 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly

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but many prefer the marginal translation 'wherein.' The latter is capable of two translations: either (*a*) 'For wherein he himself hath suffered being tempted,' or (*b*) 'Having himself been tempted in that wherein he hath suffered' (so marg.). According to (*a*) the verse would mean that Christ is able to help the tempted in all those points in which he has had the painful experience of being tempted; in other words, his power to help is co-extensive with his experience of temptation. According to (*b*) he is able to help the tempted because his sufferings have been the occasion of temptation to him. It is difficult to believe that (*b*) can be right, for its restriction of Christ's temptations to such as sprang out of his sufferings, and the consequent limitation of his helpfulness, seem to be inconsistent with the context and with iv. 15. It would probably have been expressed in less ambiguous Greek; (*a*) is not open to these objections, and it may be correct. It suffers under the limitation that Christ's succour of the tempted is given in those temptations which he has himself endured. It is true that this covers all temptations, since he has been tempted in all points in which men are tempted. But the first translation 'inasmuch as' has the advantage that it does not limit Christ's helpfulness in the case of any particular temptation to what he has gained through himself enduring it, but allows the full force of succour won through *all* his temptations to be directed to any particular case.

iii. 1—iv. 13. It is difficult to fix the place in the argument of this contrast between Moses and Jesus. It has been commonly supposed that just as the writer has contrasted the angelic givers of the law with Jesus, so now he contrasts the human lawgiver, that by the inferiority of the mediators of the Old Covenant to that of the New he may shew the inferiority of the Old Covenant itself. There are difficulties attending this view. The writer does not definitely draw this inference. He discusses the subject briefly and passes to an exhortation of much greater length. In this exhortation he derives a warning from the unbelief of the Israelites who failed to enter into the rest of God under the leadership of Moses. He also points out that this rest was not attained by the Israelites under Joshua, but still is open and is entered upon through faith. This suggests that we have to do not merely with exhortation in iii. 7—iv. 13, but with exhortation and argument combined. Warning against unbelief is interlaced with a proof of the inability of Moses and Joshua to bring their followers

into the rest of God. Some of the difficulty of the section is created by the fact that the failure of the Israelities to attain this rest is assigned to two causes. One is their own unbelief, the other that the rest into which their leaders brought them was not the true rest of God. Moses is not explicitly charged with failure, and of Joshua it is simply said that, as a matter of fact, he did not give them rest. But in this there lies a latent assertion of inferiority, attaching not merely to Joshua but to Moses, since the rest which both attempted to give was not the true but only an earthly rest. So far then as iii. 7—iv. 13 is concerned, we may see in it, besides the warning against unbelief, a proof of the inferiority to Jesus of Moses and Joshua as leaders into the rest of God. Where they failed he succeeded, though even his success cannot avail those who are guilty of unbelief. The writer does not raise the question why they failed. It is hardly true that unbelief was the sole cause, for the eleventh chapter, with its long roll of the O. T. heroes of faith, excludes such a view. The difficulty of the author's position is more clearly seen if we ask, What would have happened if those that came out of Egypt with Moses had believed? It would seem that on the principles laid down in this section he would have answered that they would have entered into the true rest of God. Yet his general argument, as well as such a definite statement as xi. 39, 40, seems to preclude the possibility of even faithful Israelites entering into that rest. We might reconcile the two points of view by the supposition, that in the days of Moses the true rest was open to Israel, but not after his time till the death of Christ. But it is highly improbable that such a thought was in the writer's mind. The view of Dr. Edwards that with each failure to enter into rest the promise of rest received a richer and deeper meaning, while it recognizes the difficulty, suggests a solution which seems to have no place in the language of the Epistle. We must probably be content to admit that the warning and the proof presuppose conflicting points of view. But this need not disturb us. For as to the warning, it remained true that the Israelites did not enter into the promised rest because of unbelief, and its force is just the same if this rest was only the settlement in Canaan and not the rest of God. And the proof that the leaders could not give the true rest is untouched, for this is the real view of the writer, and must have been so to harmonize with his whole conception. For his great charge against the Old Covenant is that it cannot give real fellowship with God. And substantially we have that thought here: The leaders of the Old Covenant could not lead into the rest of God, they could not give true communion with Him. It is further to be observed that the comparison of Jesus to the leaders of the Old Covenant is suggested by the description of him as the Leader of Salvation (ii. 10), and by the significant identity of his name

calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our

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with that of Joshua, who was the leader of Israel into the lower rest of Canaan.

But the inferiority of Moses suggested in iii. 7—iv. 14 is plainly asserted in iii. 1–6. While Jesus is Son over the house, Moses is only servant within it. This at once places Moses in line with the angels, for they also are contrasted as servants with the Son. But a tacit contrast to Moses is also suggested in the words 'the apostle and high-priest of our confession.' Moses was the apostle, the messenger sent to reveal God's will, under the Old Covenant, and is thus assimilated to the angels, who were also mediators of the Law. But probably the writer, like Philo, regarded Moses as really high-priest as well, though he delegated the functions of the office to Aaron. It is an interesting point that Jewish theology not only had a doctrine of priestly angels, but regarded Michael as high-priest. We thus have the angels, Moses, and Jesus, all thought of as revealers of God, perhaps also as priests. In any case we seem justified in saying that iii. 1—iv. 13 carries forward the argument in proof of the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old, grouping it once more about the mediators.

iii. 1–6. *Christ and Moses.* Jesus and Moses were alike faithful, but Moses as a servant in the household, Jesus as Son over it.

1. Wherefore. This may refer to the whole preceding discussion, or simply to ii. 17, 18.

holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling. The terms of address are aptly chosen to remind them of their position. They are 'consecrated' to God (ii. 11), His sons and therefore 'brethren,' as Israel had in the past been consecrated to God and His son. But, unlike their nation, they are sharers in a 'heavenly calling,' their inheritance is not Canaan, but the world to come. The author thus suggests to them the responsibility of their position, and how much they have at stake. The calling is variously regarded as issuing from heaven, or inviting to heaven, or, as by many scholars, both. 'Partakers' seems to have no reference to a participation with the Gentiles.

the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. The 'Apostle' is the envoy of God, and the word refers back to i. 2. Jesus is God's messenger to us, and our representative to God. 'Of our confession' may mean whom we confess, but probably confession means profession of faith, and the clause means, him who is apostle and high-priest in our Christian confession of faith, as opposed to Moses in the Jewish. If so, the readers already confess Jesus as high-priest, and this is not a truth taught them in this Epistle for the first time.

confession, *even* Jesus; who was faithful to him that 2
appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house. For 3
he hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses,

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2. The author wishes to affirm the superiority of Jesus to Moses, but first suggests a quality which they have in common, in order to lead up to the quotation on which the argument for superiority is based, and to pay a tribute to Moses which would soften the distastefulness of the proof of his inferiority. He shews the true skill of a teacher, in not needlessly wounding the susceptibility of his readers by disparagement of Moses.

faithful. The words 'faithful in all his house' are applied to Moses in Num. xii. 7. The application to Jesus links this verse with ii. 17. His faithfulness is specially commended to the readers as an example for themselves.

to him that appointed him. This translation is the one most widely adopted, and is defended by a similar use in 1 Sam. xii. 6; Mark iii. 14. The Greek word is literally 'made,' and, if this translation be preferred, the reference is to the incarnation, hence the human name Jesus, which excludes the reference to the eternal generation, for which 'made' would be very unsuitable. But the context favours the R. V. translation, for office rather than origin is in the author's mind.

in all his house. The words must be taken with 'Moses.' The connexion with 'Jesus' is forbidden by verses 5, 6, where Moses 'in' the house is contrasted with Christ 'over' it. 'His house' is God's house, as is clear from Num. xii. 7. Some difficulty is caused in the following verses by the use of 'house,' both of the building and the household.

3. From the parallel between Moses and Jesus in the quality of faithfulness, the writer proceeds to shew the superiority of Jesus in position. The argument seems to be: We ought to consider Jesus, for he has been deemed worthy of glory greater than that of Moses, in proportion as the glory of the founder of the household is greater than that of the household itself. Christ is he who has 'built the house'; the 'house' or household is not Moses, but the whole of which Moses is part. Some think God is the builder of the house. But it was obvious that God is worthy of more honour than Moses. The point to be proved is the worthiness of Christ, and the writer could hardly say, Christ is worthy of greater honour than Moses in proportion as the honour that belongs to God is greater than that of Moses. That Christ is the builder of the house has been already virtually said in i. 2. Whether he is regarded as founder of the O. T. order of things is doubtful. Probably in virtue of the real continuity of the new with the old,

by so much as he that built the house hath more honour
4 than the house. For every house is builded by some
5 one; but he that built all things is God. And Moses
indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for
a testimony of those things which were afterward to be
6 spoken; but Christ as a son, over his house; whose

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the founder of the new is spoken of as founder of the 'house' even when strictly the old order is in mind.

built: the margin 'established' is better, for the furnishing, arrangement, and service of the house are all included.

4. It is possible to interpret the latter part of the sentence as referring to Christ, and this is permitted by the omission of the article before God, 'he that built all things is Divine.' But more probably the verse is inserted to reconcile the reference to the house as God's in verse 2 with the assertion in verse 3 that it was founded by Christ, by reminding the readers that, of course, the ultimate founder of this, as of all things, is God. The writer thus prepares the way for the reference to Jesus as His Son over the house, and therefore superior to Moses, the servant in it.

5. Apparently this verse does not introduce a fresh contrast, but develops that between the founder and the household. Christ is founder because he is 'Son' (i. 2), and 'as Son' he is 'over the house'; Moses is part of the household, 'in the house' as a 'servant' (Num. xii. 7). Both in this verse and in verse 6 'his house' is God's house; there are not two houses, one to which Moses belongs as servant, and another over which Christ is as Son, but one only.

for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken. Probably 'those things' were the laws to be subsequently given through Moses, for immediately after the words, 'He is faithful in all mine house,' the passage continues, 'With him will I speak mouth to mouth.' As a faithful servant he could attest the authenticity of the message he delivered. Many have explained it of witness given by Moses to the gospel, the word spoken through the Lord (i. 2, ii. 3). This view is attractive, but probably if this had been meant it would have been differently expressed; the English suggests this explanation more strongly than the Greek. Von Soden thinks the 'testimony' refers to the 'tabernacle of witness' as contrasted with the N. T. house of God.

6. as a son. The same contrast of son with servant is instituted between Christ (this name occurs here for the first time in the Epistle) and Moses, as between him and the angels.

whose house: that is, God's house. That Christians are the house of God is a Pauline idea.

house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end. Wherefore, 7
even as the Holy Ghost saith,

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if we hold fast our boldness: the author thus makes the transition to the solemn warning which follows in iii. 7—iv. 13. We are God's house only on condition of steadfast adherence to the Christian hope. 'Boldness' was specially demanded by their critical circumstances, and, as is brought out in chap. xi, it is one of the most conspicuous marks of faith, the necessity of which is enforced at length in the following section.

the glorying of our hope. The author feels that in face of their temptations, their hope might grow faint. He therefore insists on their holding fast not simply a quietly cherished hope, but a loudly exulting, one might almost say aggressive, hope.

firm unto the end: this phrase occurs in verse 14, and it is omitted here by our best MS. (the Vatican Codex, commonly indicated by the symbol B). Farrar, by a curious oversight, says, 'it is found in all the best manuscripts.' It should probably be omitted, since the great similarity to verse 14 would readily cause this verse to be still further assimilated to it.

iii. 7–19. *The terrible example of Israel's unbelief.* Let the readers heed the warning of Scripture against hardness and unbelief, taking example by the Israelites who perished in the wilderness, and did not enter into God's rest because of unbelief.

7. The proof of the superiority of Christ to Moses is followed by an exhortation to give heed to his word, precisely as the proof of his superiority to the angels. It was natural that the warning should be based on the terrible example of unbelief afforded by the followers of Moses.

Wherefore. The precise logical connexion is not clear. It may be: since Christ is higher than Moses, or since Christ was thus faithful, or since we are God's house, only if we hold fast. The latter is the most probable. It is also uncertain how the word is connected with what follows. The most regular and grammatical construction is to join it with 'take heed' in verse 12. The chief objection to this is the abnormal length of the intervening parenthesis, in which, further, a second 'wherefore' occurs. We can hardly, as some do, connect with 'harden not your hearts,' for the writer would not make the words of the Holy Ghost his own. Perhaps the construction is really broken, and 'take heed' in verse 12 begins an independent sentence, though we should have expected in that case 'take heed, therefore.' Whether this or the first view be adopted, the meaning is probably the same.

even as the Holy Ghost saith: a similar formula of quotation

To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation,
Like as in the day of the temptation in the wilderness,
9 Wherewith your fathers tempted *me* by proving *me*,
And saw my works forty years.

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occurs in x. 15; cf. Acts i. 16. The use of it here may be due to the fact that the passage quoted speaks of 'his voice,' not 'my voice.' The quotation is taken from Ps. xcv. 7–11. This Psalm is probably late, but it is also not unlikely that, as several critics think, it consists of two fragments originally distinct, the second being the passage here quoted. The Psalm is ascribed to David (iv. 7), but this occurs only in the LXX and not in the Hebrew. Possibly 'in David' is merely a formula of reference to the Psalter, but this is very unlikely (see note on iv. 7).

if ye shall hear his voice. The Hebrew probably expresses a wish, 'If ye would but hearken to his voice.' Here it is a supposition and the meaning is, If to-day you should hear God speaking, do not harden your hearts. It is not clear whether the uncertainty touches God's speaking or man's hearing. If the former, the thought is, If after such provocation God graciously speaks once more. If the latter, it is, If you can hear God's voice when He speaks to-day. 'Hear' cannot carry with it the sense it sometimes has of obedient listening, for then they would not 'harden their hearts.'

Harden not your hearts. The metaphor is frequent in Scripture for obstinate refusal to obey God's will, and is sometimes ascribed to God, sometimes, as here, to men themselves. It issues in the state of 'neglect' which is so fatal (ii. 3). The 'heart' is the seat of the emotions, intellect, and will.

as in the provocation. 'Provocation' and 'temptation' are the translation of what in the Hebrew are the proper names Meribah and Massah (Exod. xvii. 1–7; Num. xx. 1–13; Deut. xxxiii. 8). The author follows the LXX. He does not think of these or any special incidents in the wilderness history, but of the whole of it, which was one long provocation and temptation of God, by doubt of His willingness or power to help. Pss. lxxviii. 12–53, lxxxi. 5–16 may be compared.

9. tempted me **by proving** me, **and saw my works forty years.** It is possible, though less natural, to take 'my works' with 'tempted,' i. e. 'tried,' as well as with 'saw,' since the former has no object in the Greek. The author has removed 'forty years' to this clause from the following, where it stands in the original, in

Wherefore I was displeased with this generation, 10
And said, They do alway err in their heart:
But they did not know my ways;
As I sware in my wrath, 11
They shall not enter into my rest.

Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any 12
one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from

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order to emphasize the long period during which God's wonderful goodness had been displayed to them, and thus to heighten the perversity of their unbelief. The meaning does not seem to be They tempted me and therefore saw my works of judgement. The Rabbis said that the kingdom of the Messiah would last forty years, and if this Epistle was written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, the quotation may have been chosen as an ominous reminder that the forty years during which the Jewish people had rejected Jesus were nearly spent. But no stress is laid on it in the exposition which follows. For 'wherewith' the margin reads 'where.'

10, 11. The punctuation is to be noticed, the greatest pause being made at 'heart,' and the next line connected with the succeeding not the preceding line. 'As' expresses the correspondence of God's oath to their ignorance of His ways, and therefore its justification by that ignorance.

11. They shall not enter: *lit.* 'If they shall enter.' Originally this introduced a formula of imprecation, the speaker invoking on himself some fearful calamity, if the event referred to should occur. In its present form, with the penalty omitted, it has been weakened into a formula of strong negation.

my rest: the land of Canaan. On the difficulty attaching to the author's idea of the rest of God see the Introduction to this section.

12. The application of the Psalmist's words to the case of the readers.

lest haply there shall be in any one of you. The form of the sentence indicates the writer's fear that such may be found. He uses the singular 'in any one,' not because he had a special individual in mind, but to induce each to examine himself.

an evil heart of unbelief. It is uncertain whether this means an evil heart produced by unbelief, or an evil heart resulting in unbelief, or an evil, that is an unbelieving, heart. The latter is perhaps the most probable. There is no reference to the origin of unbelief in the heart (in our sense) rather than the mind, for in its Biblical sense 'heart' includes mind.

in falling away from the living God. There seems to be no

13 the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so
long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be
14 hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we are become
partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our
15 confidence firm unto the end: while it is said,

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reason why such an appeal as this should not have been addressed to Jewish Christians with a temptation to return to Judaism. Such an expression as this, although it would be very naturally used of return to paganism or a fall into complete unbelief, might also be used of those who fell back from Christianity into Judaism, and thus deliberately rejected the manifest tokens of the Divine working. They fall away from the living God of progressive revelation to the God of a worn-out and dead tradition. Hort says the phrase 'implies a contrast with the true God made practically a dead deity by a lifeless and rigid form of religion; with the God in short in whom too many of the Jews virtually believed' (*Christian Ecclesia*, p. 173). There is also a reminder in the words that God is not inactive, but will certainly punish such apostasy (cf. x. 31).

13. exhort one another: *lit.* 'exhort yourselves'; but it is questionable if this should be pressed to yield the thought that the members of the church are so blended into a unity that to exhort another is to exhort oneself.

so long as it is called To-day: more literally, 'so long as the To day is called,' while God's great 'To-day' (verse 7), in which there is still opportunity to hear His voice, may still be called 'to-day' and not a yesterday which can never again be a to-day. The words probably designate the 'days of the Messiah.' The crisis of destiny is at hand, hence each must constantly stimulate the others to perseverance (x. 25). We might translate 'until the To-day is proclaimed,' but this gives an unsuitable sense, for he is not speaking of something in the future.

the deceitfulness of sin. The special reference is probably to the specious colours in which apostasy would appeal to them as loyalty to their ancient religion and to their own race with its glorious past.

14. partakers of Christ. The Pauline doctrine of union with Christ is nowhere found in the Epistle, and perhaps the margin 'with' should be preferred to 'of.'

if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence. 'If' is emphatic. For 'hold fast' cf. verse 6. 'The beginning of our confidence' is the confidence with which we have begun, not our confidence in its first as distinguished from later stages.

unto the end. The 'end' may be of life or of the age, or till confident faith gives place to realization.

To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.
For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not 16
all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? And with 17
whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with

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15. The connexion is much disputed. Some make the verse an independent sentence, in which case the quotation ends with 'voice' and the rest of the verse is the writer's exhortation. This is very improbable, for the whole has been treated as the word of the Holy Ghost in verse 7, and the second line is commented on in verse 16. Others connect with verse 16, and explain: When it is said To-day, &c.; who then were they who provoked? This view is that of many of the best commentators, but 'For' at the beginning of verse 16 makes it very difficult. We may set aside the view that it is to be connected with iv. 1, and that verses 16–19 form a parenthesis. Several connect with verse 13, in which case verse 14 is a parenthesis. If this difficulty is not insuperable this way seems best, for we thus get an admirable sense, verse 15 resuming 'so long as it is called To-day' in verse 13, and no form of connexion with verse 14 seems satisfactory.

16. The R. V. is here a great improvement on the A. V. The latter agreed with nearly all the old commentators in taking the verse as a statement that some, though not all, had provoked. But the author could not have said 'some' when he meant all but two out of six hundred thousand. Caleb and Joshua are not taken into account. As in the following verses, we have questions here, the second answering the first. The thought progresses in the four verses: (*a*) the provocation offered by Israel was universal, though it had heard the message and taken the first step in obedience, and its heinousness was aggravated by the fact that the offenders had been delivered from Egypt and had seen all the wonders of the Exodus (verse 16). (*b*) God's displeasure rested on them forty years for their sin, and their limbs strewed the desert (verse 17). (*c*) It was their disobedience that brought God to swear that they should not enter into His rest (verse 18). (*d*) And the root of their failure was unbelief (verse 19).

did not all. The author's point is, not one of you should think himself secure, for their apostasy was universal.

that came out. A voluntary act, with which their later conduct did not tally.

by Moses. The leader whom their descendants are so ready to honour, forgetful of their own greater leader. Yet with so great a leader they failed to enter in.

17. displeased forty years. This corresponds to the original

them that sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?
18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into
19 his rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see
that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.
4 Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left
of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to
2 have come short of it. For indeed we have had good

reference in the Psalm, which shews that the alteration in verse 9 is intentional, and not due to a different LXX text.

carcases: *lit.* 'limbs,' used especially of the hands and feet.

19. And we see: may mean either we see from the narrative, or we see from what we have already said.

iv. 1–13. *The rest of God.* We too have had the promise of rest, but, like Israel, may fail of it through unbelief. For it is in faith that we enter into that rest, which was established at creation, but even in David's time still remained open; for Israel had not obtained it under Joshua. Since then it still remains for us, we must be diligent to avoid the fate of disobedient Israel; for God's word discerns the most secret thoughts of our heart, and by its living force executes its own sentence.

1. therefore: since we have the failure of Israel to warn us that we may similarly fail.

a promise being left. As Israel did not realize it, but perished in the desert, the promise was left for others, since it cannot be unfulfilled. It was not attained when Israel entered Canaan (verse 8), for long after the Psalmist spoke of it as still open (verse 7). Therefore it still remains for us. The proof of this phrase occupies verses 2–10.

any one of you: see note on iii. 12. The change to the second person from 'let us fear' is noteworthy.

should seem: the meaning is not that they must avoid even the appearance, for 'even' must have been expressed. The word may mean 'think,' but this gives no suitable sense here, for the readers were not tempted to discouragement by fear that entrance was now impossible. It may mean 'be judged' to have fallen short. This gives an excellent sense, and by carrying the mind of the readers forward to the judgement adds impressiveness to the appeal. The usual view that 'seem to have come short' is a more delicate expression than the direct 'come short' yields a good but less forcible sense.

to have come short. The tense, as Westcott points out, marks 'an abiding failure.'

2. The promise still remains open for us as it was for them,

tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because they were not united by faith with them that heard. For we which 3

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for we have received glad tidings as they did. They did not believe, and therefore did not profit by the promise, which thus remained for others, and that it so remains and may be enjoyed is confirmed by our own experience (verse 3).

we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they. The stress does not lie on 'we' as the English suggests, but on the fact that 'good tidings' (marg. 'a gospel') have come to us as well as them, i. e. the good tidings of the rest of God.

the word of hearing: the word they heard, the Divine message.

because they were not united by faith with them that heard. This is the best attested reading, but is very improbable, for those who heard must be Caleb and Joshua, and in iii. 16 the author insists that all were disobedient and unbelieving, Caleb and Joshua being too trifling an exception to be taken into account. Besides, this requires us to take 'heard' in the sense 'obeyed,' which is just the sense it does not bear in iii. 16. The marginal reading 'it was' is not so well attested, but, unless we resort to conjecture, must be accepted. The change required to produce the better supported reading is very slight, and the reading in the text probably arose through assimilation to the immediately preceding 'them.' If we read 'it was,' we may translate either (*a*) 'because it was not united by faith with them that heard it' (so most commentators), or (*b*) 'because it was not mixed with faith for them that heard it.' The former means that faith was not present to make the message an integral part of the being of those who heard it; the latter that, in the case of those who heard it, the word was not mixed with faith, did not meet with a believing response, and thus remained unprofitable. The latter seems to be preferable. Westcott and Hort mark it 'as probably containing a primitive corruption,' though the former in his commentary seems to acquiesce in 'it was.' They incline to the conjecture, also defended by Bleek, 'they were not united by faith with the things heard.' Weiss pronounces it 'quite worthless,' and it may at any rate be questioned if the margin 'it was' does not give a satisfactory sense.

3. The connexion is, I say they failed to enter through lack of faith, because in our own case faith secures our entrance, and would have secured theirs. The stress lies on 'which have believed,' and might be brought out better by retaining the order of the Greek, 'For we enter into that rest, we who have believed.' The appeal is to experience, which, characteristically, the author

have believed do enter into that rest; even as he hath said,

As I sware in my wrath,
They shall not enter into my rest:

although the works were finished from the foundation of
4 the world. For he hath said somewhere of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God rested on the seventh day
5 from all his works; and in this *place* again,

They shall not enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter thereinto, and they to whom the good tidings were before

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supports by the proof from Scripture. Instead of 'For we' some early MSS. read 'We therefore.'

as he hath said. The point of the quotation is not at first apparent. It would have been quite obvious if it had immediately followed verse 2, and the first and last clauses of the verse would have stood in fairly good connexion. As the verse stands, however, the meaning seems to be, We, who have believed, enter in, since those for whom it was prepared were excluded in God's wrath, through want of faith, and therefore the way was left open for us. The last clause is added to shew that their failure to enter in was not because the rest was not ready, for the works were over and rest begun from the foundation of the world. Or the first two clauses might mean, We enter if we believe, for those who did not believe were excluded.

4. Proof from Scripture of the statement that the works were completed from the foundation of the world and God's rest begun. The quotation is from Gen. ii. 2. 'He' is God. For 'somewhere' cf. ii. 6. The reference to the 'seventh day' prepares the way for the definition of the rest as a 'sabbath rest' (verse 9).

5. Alongside of God's rest is the failure of Israel under Moses to realize it, and therefore the way is prepared for the inference that means must be taken to give it another fulfilment.

6. The writer argues that since there is a rest of God, and He has definitely declared that certain people shall not enter into it, it is clearly His purpose that others shall enter in. The unexpressed axiom on which the argument depends is that God's purpose cannot be defeated. This purpose is that man shall share His rest, and the disobedience of Israel in the wilderness cannot cancel it.

preached failed to enter in because of disobedience, he 7
again defineth a certain day, saying in David, after so
long a time, To-day, as it hath been before said,

To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
Harden not your hearts.

For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have 8

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disobedience. What is ascribed to unbelief in iii. 19 is attributed to disobedience here, since in it unbelief finds expression.

7. Since God's offer cannot be finally unaccepted, and those to whom it was first made forfeited it through disobedience, God renewed it through David, in the Psalm already quoted, and fixed the time during which it remains open as 'To-day.' We should probably adopt the margin, 'To-day, saying in David, after so long a time, as it hath been,' &c., the meaning being, He fixes a certain day namely To-day.

saying in David, after so long a time. The reference to the long interval that elapsed before the Psalm was uttered makes it probable that 'David' is not a mere expression for the Psalter, but an ascription of authorship, following the LXX. The interval is that between Moses and David, not between Moses and the present in which God is still speaking in the Psalm, as Weiss thinks. The argument is strengthened by the later date which modern scholarship assigns to the Psalm. The author uses the Psalm to shew that in David's time the rest was still open, and infers from this that it is open in his own. He neglects to shew that the promise was not fulfilled in the interval between David and Jesus. Probably he thought it unnecessary. If not in David's glorious time then certainly not at any other. The division of the kingdom, national apostasy, the extinction of the Israelitish state, the captivity of Judah and its subsequent miserable history all forbade the thought that God's rest had been attained. Solomon's reign might have been thought of, but apart from his later years, the history of Israel after his death shewed that God's *unbroken* and *eternal* rest had not been won.

8. It might be said, Israel did after all gain rest, for Joshua led them into the Promised Land, though the generation that came out of Egypt died in the desert. The author rebuts this by the argument that what Joshua gave them could not have been the rest of God, for centuries later that was still unwon. The substitution of 'Joshua' by the Revisers for the Greek form of his name 'Jesus' in the A. V. removes a serious difficulty for English readers.

9 spoken afterward of another day. There remaineth
10 therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God. For he
that is entered into his rest hath himself also rested from
11 his works, as God did from his. Let us therefore give
diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after

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he would not have spoken: better, 'he would not have been speaking,' i. e. in the Psalm.

9. Inference from the preceding. A rest therefore still remains. But its character is also defined by the fact that this rest is 'my rest.' For God's rest is the sabbath after the six days' creation. So the rest that remaineth is a 'sabbath rest.' The change from 'rest' to 'sabbath rest,' obliterated in the A. V., is important. The word occurs only here and in Plutarch, but the verb occurs several times in the LXX. The Rabbis spoke of the sabbath as a type of the world to come. Such a rest cannot be identified with the settlement in Canaan.

the people of God. There is perhaps a primary reference to Israel. Hort says that the term 'includes the ancient people, and is in fact suggested by the purpose of the Epistle as being addressed to Christians who were also Jews' (*The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 13).

10. The connexion is not quite clear. It may be I call this rest a sabbath rest, for rest implies cessation of toil as we see in God's sabbatical rest. Or it may be there 'remaineth' a sabbath rest, for this implies cessation from works, and as yet man has not achieved this. Neither is it clear what resting from works means. The reference to a rest enjoyed after death, when toil is over, for which Rev. xiv. 13 is compared, does not satisfy the writer's view, for he appeals in verse 3 to the experience of rest already enjoyed by believers. His thought seems to hover between the conception of a rest open to Christians on earth and one to be enjoyed hereafter. The truth is probably that he thought of God's rest as belonging to the world to come, but as already won by faith. Faith is the power which lifts us into the world to come. The view that 'he that is entered into his rest' is the exalted Christ is improbable.

11. Practical conclusion from the preceding argument, corresponding to verse 1, but with stress on the need for earnest endeavour, if they are to achieve this rest and avoid the disobedience of the Israelites and the fate into which they fell.

fall: i. e. perish. And with this sense the following words seem to mean 'giving the same example.' Others connect 'fall' with the following words, as in the margin, 'fall into the same example.' This is taken to be a concise expression for fall into

the same example of disobedience. For the word of 12
God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged

their perversity and thus afford a similar example. This is harsh and improbable.

12, 13. The warning contained in the words of the Holy Ghost (iii. 7–11) is driven home by this description of the qualities of the Divine Word. It possesses an inherent energy which will secure its fulfilment. We cannot think to escape by outward correctness of conduct if within us is the evil heart of unbelief. For this Word is gifted with the keenest discernment, submits our motives to sharp critical analysis and tracks with searching scrutiny the subtlest winding of our thought. Nothing can elude God's comprehensive notice, but all things are exposed to His penetrating gaze. This Word is not the Son, the personal Logos of the Prologue to the Gospel of John; for this would have no relevance in this context, and the inappropriateness of the language to him will be readily seen if the Son or Jesus or Christ be substituted for 'the word of God.' The passage has striking parallels in Philo. He speaks of the Logos 'which cuts through everything, which, being sharpened to the finest possible edge, never ceases dividing all the objects of the outward senses, and when it has gone through them all, and arrived at the things which are called atoms and indivisible, then again this divider begins from them to divide those things which may be contemplated by the speculations of the reason,' &c. (*Quis rerum divinarum haeres sit*, quoted from Yonge's translation, vol. ii. p. 119). The flaming sword is also interpreted of the Logos, which divides the intellect from the body. Of course 'the word of God' here is very different from Philo's Logos, but the influence of his teaching should probably not be confined to phraseology. For the inherent energy of the Word of God, which brings about its own fulfilment, we may compare the O. T. doctrine of the prophetic word as expressed in Isa. lv. 10, 11; or Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. To antiquity the spoken word had a force far greater than we assign to it, almost a magical efficacy in some instances (see an interesting note in Paul Ruben's *Critical Remarks upon some Passages of the O.T.* pp. 1–3). How much more then would this be true of the word of the living God!

living, and active. Its life does not pass away when it is uttered, nor is its vital energy exhausted. It is quick with God's immortal life, and works on with force unspent by the lapse of ages. And therefore the To-day of Scripture is not past but always present, and its warnings and exhortations are always fresh. The principle has a wide application in the Epistle; it speaks of the tabernacle and its ritual as ordained in Scripture rather than of its historical embodiment in the temple; so, too,

sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern
13 the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Melchizedek is for the author essentially what he is on the page of Genesis.

sharper than any two-edged sword: i. e. a sword with a second edge instead of a back, which, as it is not so thick, meets with less resistance and cuts deeper. Incomparable among weapons, as it is, for sharpness, the sword of the Spirit (Eph. vi. 17) is a blade keener edged still.

and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow. The meaning is not that the Word separates soul from spirit, joints from marrow, but that it pierces to the inmost core of being, penetrating through the soul and deeper still through the spirit, through the joints to the very marrow. The 'joints' and 'marrow' can hardly be physical as some think. It is a metaphor borrowed from warfare. Just as the keen blade lays bare the inmost recesses of the physical frame, severing the hard joints, and reaching the marrow within the bones, so the Word, unhindered by resistance, cuts through to the most secret places of the spirit's life.

quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Not only has the Word this power of searching analysis, but a 'critical' faculty too. When it dissects man's spiritual nature, it passes judgement on the thoughts and purposes it thus brings to the relentless light. 'Quick to discern' scarcely represents the true meaning, which is rather 'able to judge.' The Greek word is the same as the English 'critical.'

13. The writer passes from the Word to God whose word it is, and who is present in it. Cf. Enoch ix. 5. 'All things are manifest and unconcealed in thy sight, and thou seest all things and nothing can hide itself from thee.'

laid open. The word so translated occurs nowhere else in the N. T., and while the general sense must be 'exposed,' the precise meaning is uncertain. It is often used by Philo in the sense 'overthrow,' 'prostrate,' and some take it in a similar sense here (e. g. Westcott, 'brought by an overmastering power into full view before His eyes'). The verb is derived from a noun meaning 'neck' or 'throat,' and several think it means to bend back the neck and thus expose throat and chest to view. The metaphor

Having then a great high priest, who hath passed 14
through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold
fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that 15

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is then either of criminals compelled to shew their face, or of victims with throat exposed for the sacrificial knife.

with whom we have to do. A somewhat free but perhaps correct translation. The literal translation is 'towards whom there is for us the word.' We have our 'word' with God, as He His with us. But the term does not mean 'word' here. The English translation implies the sense 'relation.' We ought perhaps to translate 'to whom we must give account.'

iv. 14—x. 18. In this section, the transition to which is formed by verses 14–16, the writer expounds the superiority of the priesthood of the New Covenant to that of the Old. The doctrine of the priesthood of Christ presents numerous difficulties, which are best treated as they arise.

iv. 14–16. *Jesus our sympathetic high-priest.* Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have a high-priest who has entered into God's immediate presence, let us hold fast. For our high-priest sympathizes with us, since he has passed through all our temptations, yet without sin. We should therefore boldly draw nigh to the throne of grace, assured of mercy and help.

This section is connected with the preceding by 'then' and the exhortation 'let us hold fast our confession,' and prepares the way for the discussion that is to follow by what is said of Jesus our great high-priest.

14. then. The logical connexion indicated is uncertain. This sentence summarises much that has gone before: his high-priesthood in ii. 17, iii. 1; his greatness and Divine sonship in i. and iii. 1–6; his humanity in ii. 5–18; his having passed through the heavens in i. 3, 13.

a great high priest. Philo uses the same phrase. By 'great' is probably meant mighty, and especially mighty to save.

who hath passed through the heavens. Jewish theology spoke of several heavens, usually seven. It is not in one of the lower heavens that our high-priest is tarrying. He has passed through all the outer courts, into the heavenly Holy of Holies, the very presence of God (vii. 26, ix. 24).

Jesus the Son of God: a significant combination of the human and Divine names. As one of ourselves and also the Son of God, he unites in himself the nature of both; he is beyond all others fit to mediate between us. We should therefore 'hold fast our confession' (iii. 1) since no other is thus adequate to our need.

15. Yet we need more than human nature in our Divine

cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as *we*

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high-priest. We need human experience. He must have felt the extreme pressure of our difficulties that he may sympathize with us. Since sin is the great hindrance to fellowship with God, a high-priest must render effectual help at this point. A fellow feeling, created by community of experience, must be combined with power to give the sympathy practical effect. The Jewish high-priest was qualified to sympathize with sinners, because he was himself a sinner (v. 2, 3). But just because he was a sinner he could not help his fellows, for he was caught in the same evil snare. The problem was therefore to secure sympathy and yet to preserve sinlessness. The solution is found in temptation of the severest kind met by perfect resistance. And the keenest agony of temptation can be known only by one who remains sinless. Others are tried till they yield, and those who yield soonest suffer least. Jesus was plied with all the temptations to which others had succumbed. But as he did not yield to these he must have been assailed with temptations fiercer still, yet these, though pushed to the highest point of intensity, were never met with the faintest weakening of the will which held so firmly to God. His natural and innocent human needs and appetites became channels of temptation, when the sweet pleasure of their gratification lay through transgression of the Father's will. Deeper still lay the peril to his trust in God's goodness, created by the sin and misery of the world. All our temptations he knew, feeling them not with our coarse and blunted perceptions, but with exquisite and fine-strung sensitiveness. Because he suffered all that we suffered he can appreciate to the full the terrible strain of temptation; because he triumphed he has proved in victory his power to help. And sinlessness alone can truly estimate sin, for the very act of sinning disturbs the balance of the moral judgement. Once more the author shews how full of encouragement is that humiliation which was to his readers so great a stumbling-block.

For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. The exaltation of Christ might suggest a doubt of his sympathy with men. There may also be a tacit contrast to the Jewish doctrine of a high-priestly angel, who could not be tempted as we are, or learn sympathy with us. 'For' gives a further reason for the exhortation to hold fast our confidence.

in all points tempted like as we are. This, like the similar phrase in ii. 17, is important for the light it throws on the limitations imposed by the conditions of the Son's human life. Here it may specially be noticed that limitation of knowledge is certainly

are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with 16
boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive
mercy, and may find grace to help *us* in time of need.

For every high priest, being taken from among men, 5

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implied. Some of our severest temptations are caused by appearances, which at times suggest that the world cannot be governed by a good God. Those who still believe in His goodness are driven into the position that things bear this appearance because of our ignorance. If we knew all, we should know that all was well. Now it is incredible that Christ should not have been tempted in this, the central point of religion. But such a temptation would have been impossible to omniscience.

without sin may mean that, unlike us, Christ had no sin in himself, there was no traitor in the camp to which temptation could appeal. But perhaps it is better to regard the words as indicating the result of the temptation. It never issued in sin. Philo says: 'For we say that the high-priest is not man but the Divine Logos, who is free from participation not only in voluntary but involuntary wrongdoings.'

16. Since therefore we have at God's right hand so sympathetic and powerful an advocate, we should approach God's gracious throne with all joyful confidence that we shall find a response of pity and effectual help for all our need. In the free, unrestricted access to God which Christianity gives, its superiority to Judaism essentially consists, and, indeed, its perfection as a religion. We may 'draw near,' since it is a 'throne of grace,' and it is a 'throne of grace,' not a judgement-seat, because our high-priest sits at the Father's right hand. Under the Old Covenant the priests alone could draw nigh, and they only with elaborate precautions, and the people could not come near at all. And such drawing near as was possible was ineffective in its unreality; it gave the worshipper no communion with God.

v. 1–10. *The high-priesthood of Christ.* A human high-priest must be gentle with the weak, since he himself is weak, and he cannot be self-elected to his office. So Christ became a high-priest by Divine appointment and, though he recoiled in agony from the office, learnt obedience through this suffering, and was hailed of God high-priest after the order of Melchizedek.

With this section the writer proceeds to the fuller development of the doctrine of the high-priesthood of Christ. He begins with a statement of the qualifications of every human high-priest. He must 'bear gently' with the sinful, for he himself is 'compassed with infirmity,' and he must not arrogate the office to himself, but be chosen to it by God. These qualifications meet

is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that
2 he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can
bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he
3 himself also is compassed with infirmity; and by reason
thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself,

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in Christ, though with this difference, that his sympathy with the sinful was not conferred by participation in their moral infirmity, but by experience of the whole range of human temptation. Further, since the high-priest has to act for men, he must himself be 'taken from among men,' and for the Son this involved the Incarnation. Of the conditions thus laid down for the office, only that of Divine appointment is here shewn to be true of Christ, since his humanity and sympathy have been sufficiently asserted already. Yet verses 7-9, while not intended to establish the fact of his sympathy, suggest the lines on which it was perfectly attained.

1. gifts and sacrifices: vegetable and animal sacrifices. The reference is probably to the Day of Atonement, on which both were offered. It is true that the words are sometimes used for either kind of sacrifice, but when thus combined the distinction between them should be maintained. Probably 'for sins' should be connected with both, the author thinking of the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement as 'for sins,' without asking whether this was true of the vegetable offering regarded in itself.

2. bear gently. The word means literally 'to exhibit moderate emotion' as opposed to the suppression of all emotion on the one hand and violent emotion on the other. Here it is not chosen to express carefully regulated restraint of sympathy, but leniency in moral judgement.

the ignorant and erring: since high-handed and wilful sin could not be atoned for, but was visited with death (Num. xv. 30, 31; Deut. xvii. 12). Probably a deeper and more settled hostility to God's law is meant than we commonly attach to the term 'wilful sin.'

infirmity: moral weakness. In this respect Christ is unlike other high-priests, but he is able to 'bear gently' because he knows how terrible the strain of temptation is.

3. Since he is thus the victim of moral infirmity he must offer for himself as well as the people. 'He is bound' by the law (Lev. xvi. 6, 11), not by his own sense of guilt, for the obligation is that which also compels him to offer for the people. The law thus emphasized his community with his people in sin, and clearly only one whose sin had been atoned for could atone for that of others.

to offer for sins. And no man taketh the honour unto 4
himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron.
So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high 5
priest, but he that spake unto him,

Thou art my Son,
This day have I begotten thee:

as he saith also in another *place*, 6

Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.

Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers 7

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4. The second qualification. The high-priest must not appoint himself, but be called of God. So responsible an office must not be filled by self-election. No man, who thinks so extravagantly of himself as to deem himself worthy of such an honour, would be likely to shew the compassion for others which would spring from a true self-knowledge. Not such was the high-priesthood of Aaron, who was called by God Himself. There seems to be no allusion to the fact that the high-priests had been appointed by the Roman government, for the author consistently views the O.T. economy from the standpoint of the law, not of contemporary history. Much stress is laid in Scripture on the Divine call, as in the story of Korah.

5. Christ. We should perhaps translate 'the Christ,' in which case the author seems to treat the high-priestly as higher than the Messianic dignity. Though Messiah he did not glorify himself to be made a high-priest. There may be also an allusion to the title 'the anointed priest,' commonly given to the high-priest in the law.

but he that spake unto him. It is not meant that the words which follow contain the Divine appointment. The clause, with the quotation, simply means God; but, instead of saying God, the author speaks as he does to indicate that it was natural that God should call His own Son to the office of high-priest. On the quotation see note on i. 5.

6. The quotation in this verse is from Ps. cx. 4 (see note on i. 13). It plays a leading part in the argument. Just as the reference to the high-priest in ii. 17 and iii. 1 is succeeded by an elaborate exhortation before the thought is more fully developed, so with the reference to the priest after the order of Melchizedek here and in verse 10. The writer prepares the way by choosing a passage mentioning the Melchizedek priesthood for his proof that Christ is a God-appointed priest.

7. Proof from the earthly life of Christ that he did not take

and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been

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the priesthood to himself. He shewed a perfect obedience to the Father. So far from seeking it he shrank in agony from it, and accepted it only in filial submission to the will of God.

The very attractive view that the offering of **prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears** corresponded to the high-priest's offering for himself on the Day of Atonement (Hofmann, Gess) should probably be set aside. It is not really supported by the mention of the high-priest's double offering in verse 3, for his offering for himself was occasioned by his personal sin, the very point in which he differed from Christ, who also had to learn sympathy, but in another way. vii. 27, to which Gess appeals, does not substantiate his view. For Christ certainly did not offer for his own sins, and the answer Gess gives to this point, that such a misunderstanding was excluded by vii. 26, and that the readers would know what was meant, is untenable. For if in the case of Christ we must substitute *for himself* in place of *for his sins*, it is not at all clear what an offering for himself means. The sacrificial meaning of the term would be fully satisfied if we regarded the prayer and tears as part of his sacrifice. This is bound up with the view that the Priesthood of Christ began on earth. But the argument is not here concerned with what he did as high-priest, but with the process through which he was prepared for the office.

The passage clearly refers to the agony, and there seems to be no reason why the 'strong crying' should be explained of the loud cry on the cross. The author was probably acquainted with a form of the gospel tradition, in which the crying and tears were mentioned. An interesting parallel (also noticed by Davidson) is Hosea's reference to Jacob's wrestling (xii. 4), in which he speaks of him as weeping and making supplication to the angel, of which we read nothing in Genesis. Bruce has well pointed out that this description of the agony seems to exclude the view that Luke wrote the Epistle, for in the genuine text of his Gospel the agony itself is omitted from the narrative (Luke xxii. 43, 44 being a later addition). We do not know what the writer took to be the precise import of Christ's prayer. He prayed to be saved 'from' or 'out of death' (marg.). Setting aside the impossible view that he prayed to be saved from immediate death in the garden, in order that he might die on the cross, we may say that he prayed either to be saved from the cross, or to be rescued out of death by the resurrection. Even if the resurrection was the actual answer he received, it does not follow that he prayed for

heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned 8
obedience by the things which he suffered; and having 9
been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey

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this. The most natural interpretation is that the prayer was for delivery from the cross, by which is not meant that he shrank from the physical pain, but from all that was involved in its sacrificial character. We have thus an intense realization by Jesus of the agony of his death, which was the final lesson of obedience learnt through suffering, by which his perfection as captain of salvation was attained.

heard for his godly fear. Several explain the words to mean that Christ was heard and delivered from his fear of death. The words may bear this meaning, but 'godly fear' or 'piety' is more probably correct, and the best commentary is 'not my will, but thine, be done.' The answer may have been given in the strengthening to bear his burden, but more probably in the resurrection.

8. though he was a Son. Since the note of sonship is obedience, it might be thought that this lesson at least would not need to be learned by Jesus. But it was one of the consequences of his incarnation, and one of his necessary qualifications for leadership, that he should pass through a human discipline in which he could learn a human obedience, an obedience rendered in spite of the most terrible pressure towards disobedience. It was only when this had been achieved in the bitterest of all trials that his training for his position was complete and he had nothing more to learn. Progress is implied, not in the completeness of his submission to his Father's will, but in the fact that the tests of obedience were increasingly severe. Each lesson in his moral education was perfectly mastered, but the final lessons were of unparalleled difficulty.

by the things which he suffered. The special reference is to the suffering mentioned in verse 7, but as the climax of a long series. 'Though he was a Son' refers to this clause as well as to 'learned obedience,' since suffering might seem incompatible with his position as Son. Here once more the author shews the value of that which was for his readers so great a stumbling-block.

9. made perfect: cf. ii. 10. The stress here is not on his exaltation so much as on his moral perfecting through suffering.

unto all them that obey him. The obedience to God which he learned and through which he was saved out of death has to be shewn by his followers to himself, and thus he will save them.

10 him the author of eternal salvation; named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

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the author of eternal salvation: in ii. 10 a different Greek word is used. That used here means literally 'cause.' Just because he has achieved his victory he can confer on his followers eternal salvation. As the next verse explains, he is 'author of salvation' because he is 'high priest after the order of Melchizedek,' of 'eternal' salvation because he is high-priest for ever; and he has been qualified for this office by his obedience.

10. named, or 'saluted'; not in Ps. cx. 4, where he is named simply 'priest.' The reference is probably to his entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, and the language must not be prosaically interpreted. It does not prove that he was not such a priest before his death. The salutation does not necessarily constitute him high-priest.

a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. What this involves is drawn out at length in ch. vii; for the writer feels it necessary to interrupt the theoretical exposition of his theme by another solemn warning, due to the culpable immaturity of his readers.

At this point the difficult and much-debated question may be raised, When did the high-priesthood of Christ begin? There are several passages which suggest very strongly that while on earth Christ was not a high-priest but became one only on his entrance into heaven. We have first the definite statement, 'If he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all' (viii. 4). So in vii. 26–28 the high-priest who befits us is one who has been made higher than the heavens, and he who has been appointed high-priest is a Son, perfected for evermore. The passage before us might be similarly interpreted (cf. vi. 19, 20, viii. 1–3). On the other hand it may be argued that Christ's offering of himself on the cross was a high-priestly act. This seems to be definitely asserted in x. 10–14. The 'one sacrifice' and 'one offering' are defined in verse 10 as 'the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' The offering of the 'body' cannot be supposed to have taken place in the heavenly sanctuary, for only the 'blood' of the victim was carried into the Holy of Holies. The reference must be to the offering of the body on the cross, and since the offering is ascribed to Christ, we must regard his death as a high-priestly act. And in connexion with this it is to be remembered that, while in Jewish sacrifices it was frequently the duty of the offerer to slay the victim on the Day of Atonement, the ritual of which controls the typology of the Epistle, the victim was slain by the high-priest (Lev. xvi. 15). This view that Christ was a high-priest at the time of his death is supported also by vii. 27 and ix. 24–28 (where

a visible offering seems to be referred to), though these could be more readily accommodated to the view that the offering was confined to heaven. Can we then reconcile these statements that Christ could not be a priest on earth, and yet that the offering of his body on the cross was a high-priestly act? It has been argued by several eminent scholars that Christ was a high-priest after the order of Aaron as well as a priest or high-priest after the order of Melchizedek, the latter priesthood being confined to the heavenly sanctuary. But it is clearly asserted that Christ cannot belong to the Aaronic priesthood because he is of the tribe of Judah. And the distinction is otherwise illegitimate. A deep cleft divides the Old Covenant from the New. On the one side we have this age, with its Levitical priesthood, subject to death and girded about with sin, serving in a sanctuary which was but the copy of the true, offering repeated, and therefore ineffective, sacrifice, its victims material, their death involuntary and therefore non-moral. And on the other side we have the age to come with its Melchizedek priesthood, eternal and sinless, serving in the heavenly sanctuary of which the earthly was but the shadow, with a single and therefore final and perfect sacrifice, its victim offered through an eternal spirit, his death voluntary and therefore moral. Across this deep gulf there is no passage ; with the inefficient priesthood of Aaron a Melchizedek priest can have nothing to do. According to Riehm not merely the suffering on earth but even the presentation of the blood in heaven belongs to the Aaronic type of priesthood, and he is priest after the order of Melchizedek in so far as he lives for ever, and is priest for ever to make intercession. It is, of course, perfectly true that the O. T. narrative does not represent Melchizedek as offering a sacrifice. But it would be certainly hazardous to press the author's inference from silence to the extent of supposing that he thought of Melchizedek's priesthood as non-sacrificial in character. Such a view is virtually contradicted by viii. 3, 4, where the function of the high-priest is said to be to offer sacrifices, and just because Christ is a high-priest he must have something to offer. No distinction is tenable between priest and high-priest after the order of Melchizedek, nor between priest and high-priest as non-sacrificing and sacrificing. It is therefore clear that the author regarded Melchizedek as a sacrificing priest. Christ is thus a high-priest of his order, not simply in that he is a king-priest who lives and intercedes for ever, but in that he is a sacrificing priest. What he has to offer he offers as Melchizedek priest and its virtue consists largely in that fact. If, then, he offered his body on the cross, he must have been a priest of this order before his death. And this suggests an answer to the question, When did he become high-priest? At the close of the Agony, when he had learnt his sorest lesson of obedience and had achieved moral perfection.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing.

But how is this conclusion to be harmonized with the assertion that if Christ were on earth, he would not be a priest at all? It is, of course, clear that his sanctuary is in heaven, and that the culmination of his sacrifice is to be found in that act in heaven which corresponds to the high-priest's presentation of the blood in the Holy of Holies. But this does not exclude the slaughter of the victim from the high-priestly act. The difficulty disappears when we rid ouselves of local and spatial modes of thought. The essential characteristic of Christ's priesthood is that it is heavenly and not earthly. It belongs to the age to come or the world to come, and not to this age or this world. The distinction between the ages is not radically one of time, nor that of the worlds one of space, but rather one of intrinsic character. The same ambiguity lies in the whole position of Christians in this world. While, locally and temporally regarded, they belong to this world, really they have already come to the New Jerusalem. Thus the death of Christ, while the act of men in time and accomplished on earth, really belonged, in virtue of its intrinsic character, to the heavenly and eternal and not to the earthly or temporal order. Not, of course, that he entered the heavenly Holy of Holies before his death. Neither on the Day of Atonement was the victim slain in the sanctuary, but its slaughter was none the less a high-priestly act. So Christ as high-priest offered his body on the cross, and then entered the heavenly Holy of Holies. But we need not re-introduce spatial ideas, and think of earth as the outer court of heaven, in which case the heavens through which Christ passed would correspond to the Holy Place. By the removal of the veil the Holy Place has become part of the Holy of Holies.

It will be clear from the fact that the Day of Atonement dominates the typology of the Epistle why no theological significance could be attached to the resurrection. The bodies of the victims, as in the more sacred sin offerings (xiii. 11), were burned outside the camp, as the safest way to dispose of flesh too holy to be eaten.

v. 11–14. *The reprehensible dullness of the readers.* The truth of Christ's Melchizedek priesthood is hard to expound to the readers, for their spiritual perception is so dull that, though by this time they ought to be teachers, they need to learn the rudiments. They are babes, not practised as yet to take solid food.

11. Of whom: either Melchizedek or Christ, or Christ as priest after the order of Melchizedek, or Melchizedek as type of Christ. The last seems the most probable. The margin 'which,' i. e. Christ's Melchizedek priesthood, is less natural.

hard of interpretation: *lit.* 'hard to be interpreted to say,'

For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, 12
ye have need again that some one teach you the
rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God;
and are become such as have need of milk, and not of
solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is 13
without experience of the word of righteousness; for he
is a babe. But solid food is for fullgrown men, *even* 14
those who by reason of use have their senses exercised
to discern good and evil.

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which shews that it is the writer who feels the difficulty rather than the readers, though their dullness is the reason why he finds it hard to make his meaning plain.

12. This verse is important as shewing that the readers were Christians of long standing. The language also suits best a small homogeneous section of a church, not the whole church in the city to which it was sent.

that some one teach you the rudiments. This is better than the margin, 'that one teach you which be the rudiments,' which is preferred by very many, for the readers needed to be taught the rudiments rather than to be taught what the rudiments were. There is perhaps a keen irony in 'some one,' as if any Christian would be competent to do this, but more probably it is a less direct way of referring to himself.

the first principles of the oracles of God. These rudiments are probably those enumerated in vi. 1, 2. 'First principles' is literally 'beginning.' 'The oracles of God' probably do not mean the O. T., but the word spoken by Him in the Son. They need instruction in the elements of Christianity.

milk: cf. 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2, though the root of the infantile character of the Corinthians is different. Philo also uses this very obvious figure, and the Rabbis spoke of their junior pupils as 'sucklings.'

13. that partaketh of milk: that lives exclusively on milk.

is without experience of the word of righteousness. An infant is unable to utter or understand rational discourse. Similar is the condition of those in their spiritual childhood. They can assimilate only the most elementary teaching, they are unversed in anything beyond it. The sense of the phrase 'word of righteousness' is much disputed. The article is absent in Greek. The term might mean 'correct doctrine,' or 'doctrine concerning righteousness,' or 'doctrine which leads to righteousness.' The general sense is plain.

14. who by reason of use have their senses exercised. The

6 Wherefore let us cease to speak of the first principles

immaturity of the readers is due to their culpable neglect in disciplining their faculties of spiritual intelligence. The 'full-grown' (marg. 'perfect') have become so by constant training of their faculties.

to discern good and evil. To discriminate between the true and false. It is not the morally good and evil of which he is speaking, but the power to distinguish wholesome from pernicious teaching.

vi. 1–8. *The need for advance and peril of falling away.* Let the readers leave the rudiments and advance to maturity. For it is not possible to renew to repentance those who have become Christians and fallen away, seeing they repeat the shameful crucifixion of the Son of God. While the fruitful field is blessed, one that bears thorns is rejected.

1–3. It is disputed whether the author means that he will cease to discuss the elementary and pass on to the deeper truths, or that the readers should no longer remain content with the first principles but should advance to maturity. It is scarcely conclusive against the former view that as a matter of fact he passes on to an impressive warning, for the deeper truth does come when his exposition is resumed. At the same time warning against apostasy follows better on the exhortation to advance, for the author realizes that if they stand still they will soon begin to fall back. And it may also be urged that he has not been discussing the elementary truths at all, if those truths are the doctrines he proceeds to enumerate. The connexion also favours the second view. To say 'Because you are dull and inexperienced let me cease to speak to you of the simple and expound the more advanced doctrine,' is less natural than 'Because you are dull and inexperienced leave the elementary and advance to the more profound.' The latter connexion is quite natural while the former would require us to insert some clause in thought in order to effect the transition from the premise to the conclusion, such as 'since no one would wish you to remain in this unsatisfactory state I will stimulate your powers by giving you more solid teaching to assimilate.' Several scholars combine the two. This imposes a double sense on 'leave,' 'press on,' 'laying again,' and the view is legitimate only in so far as the author's subsequent progress in the argument assumes that the exhortation here has been obeyed, but his purpose to advance in the exposition is not expressed in verses 1–3.

1. Wherefore. Since you ought to have but have not advanced beyond the elementary stage.

let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ. The

of Christ, and press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of

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margin 'leave the word of the beginning of Christ' is better, since it is more faithful, and admits of either of the two interpretations just discussed. 'The word of the beginning of Christ' is difficult. The Greek order suggests that it should mean teaching about the beginning of Christ (or the Messiah), but it is difficult to attach any satisfactory meaning to this, so we should perhaps accept the usual explanation—rudimentary teaching about Christ; cf. v. 12. This they must leave, not in the sense of forsaking but of advancing beyond an elementary stage.

perfection (marg. 'full growth'): not moral perfection, but intellectual maturity.

not laying again a foundation. The phrase implies that certain things have been done and certain teaching has been given to the readers at the outset of their Christian life as a basis on which more advanced teaching may be built. This basis is described in the following clauses. The most striking feature about the six fundamentals is their apparent freedom from a specifically Christian character. This passage is the stronghold of those who deny that the readers were Jewish Christians. They argue that all the points here enumerated were to be found in Judaism, and therefore that if the readers were originally Jews, this foundation would not need to be laid for them when they became Christians, whereas it would be necessary for converts from heathenism. As a general criticism on this it may be said that 'the word of the beginning of Christ' can hardly refer to religious acts performed or doctrines held by Jews and Christians in common, but, so far as these fundamentals were present in Judaism, to the specifically Christian presentation of them. And this is confirmed by the consideration that a Christian missionary would not begin with these practices or doctrines, as understood by Jews, and then erect upon this foundation a definitely Christian teaching. From the outset the Christian element must have been present. And we should not forget that no doctrine of Judaism can be simply taken over into Christianity. It is transformed in the process, and therefore it was especially necessary that Jews who became Christians should be taught to re-interpret their old doctrines from their higher point of view.

repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. The author does not speak of a doctrine of repentance and faith. He means, you are not to begin over again your Christian life by repenting and believing. The doctrines follow. 'Dead works' are not necessarily sinful works, though they defile the conscience (ix. 14), for under the law defilement was incurred by other things

2 faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of
laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and
3 of eternal judgement. And this will we do, if God

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besides sin. They are dead as opposed to living, the vain external works of legalism. The phrase does not imply that the readers had been heathen; on the contrary, it is very apt to express the transition from Judaism to Christianity, from the religion of legalism and unfruitful self-righteousness to one of grace and freedom. 'Faith toward God' does seem less suitable to Jews than Gentiles, seeing that the former already possessed faith in the true God. But it is not belief in the unity of God, but the specifically Christian faith in the living God, who has fulfilled the Messianic promises and spoken in His Son.

2. of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands. He adds 'teaching' to shew that it is not of the repetition of these rites that he is speaking, but of re-stating the doctrine as to their import. The plural 'baptisms' (marg. 'washings') is probably chosen to cover Jewish and Christian baptism and ceremonial washings, perhaps also the baptism of John, and the 'teaching' would be concerned with the difference between Christian baptism and Jewish baptism of proselytes and washings for purification. This would be very natural instruction to give a Jew when he became a Christian. 'The laying on of hands' was practised in the early church in order that the newly baptized might receive the Holy Ghost. An ingenious attempt has been made by Dr. R. G. Balfour to take these two clauses as explanatory of repentance and faith, in the sense that these doctrines were taught in the O. T. by its laws as to washings and the imposition of hands. 'Teaching' would then bear the sense 'things taught by,' which is not so natural, and the plural 'baptisms' is well explained on the other view, while the interpretation of the 'laying on of hands' of the action of the high-priest, by which he transferred the guilt of Israel to the 'goat for Azazel' (Lev. xvi. 21), is far-fetched. There are other explanations of the clauses which it is needless to enumerate.

of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement. The former of these had, it is true, come to be a common article of Jewish belief. But it was not a foundation doctrine, was not held universally, and, so far as it was believed, was accepted on far less solid grounds than in Christianity. Besides, the Christian eschatology was, in the nature of the case, widely different from the narrow national eschatology of Judaism. By 'judgement' is meant not the trial but the sentence.

3. At first sight this seems to suit the view that in verses 1 and 2 the writer expresses his purpose to give more advanced teaching.

permit. For as touching those who were once en- 4
lightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made

But the words, 'if God permit,' which are no mere pious formula, though frequently used as such in the private letters of the time, are against this, for while it is true that whatever we do we do by God's permission, the author can hardly have meant anything so commonplace as that he will proceed to higher doctrine if God permits. He means that he and the readers will advance to maturity, and he adds 'If God permit,' because he feels that there may be cases where such permission may not be granted. This feeling finds expression in verses 4–6, for which this phrase thus prepares the way.

4. For. The connexion is uncertain. The simplest is, We will advance to maturity, if God permit, for cases may be supposed in which renewal is impossible. But while this supplies the immediate point of contact, the connexion is broadly with the whole of verses 1–3. Let us advance, for the condition of the apostate is terrible. The underlying thought is that there can be no such thing as standing still: if they are not going forward, they must be slipping back, and on the road to apostasy. If the author has been speaking of his own intention to give profounder teaching, the connexion is probably, I will not speak of these elements, for those who have experienced their reality and have then fallen away are in a practically hopeless condition.

once enlightened. Who had received the Christian revelation once for all. They could never be again as though they had not seen 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Owing to the use of this word for baptism, the Fathers generally inferred from the passage the impossibility of rebaptism, while the Montanists and Novatianists inferred that there was no repentance for post-baptismal sin of a flagrant kind, except by baptism in the blood of martyrdom.

tasted of the heavenly gift (marg. 'having both tasted of . . . and being made . . . and having tasted,' &c.). 'Tasted of' means experienced, not to taste with the tip of the lips, as Calvin for dogmatic reasons interpreted it. The case supposed is of those who have had a real Christian experience, and the author's whole emphasis is nullified if he is thought to be speaking of those who have had a mere glimmer of light and no genuine experience of salvation. His warning shews that he was dealing with threatened lapse on the part of his readers, whom he regarded as Christians of long standing. It is the reality of their conversion and Christian life that makes their falling away possible and their renewal so impossible. 'The heavenly gift' is variously explained as the forgiveness of sins or righteousness, Christ, the gospel,

5 partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word
6 of God, and the powers of the age to come, and *then* fell
away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repent-

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grace, the Holy Spirit. The last it can hardly be, because that is expressed in the following clause. We should think probably of conversion as in the author's mind. These two clauses may correspond to 'baptisms,' just as 'made partakers of the Holy Ghost' seems to correspond to 'laying on of hands,' and 'tasted the powers of the age to come' to resurrection and judgement.

made partakers of the Holy Ghost. This is quite incompatible with any other view than that those referred to were Christians, who had experienced a genuine conversion.

5. tasted the good word of God. The change from 'tasted of' to 'tasted' may be intentional, and if so we ought perhaps to translate, as in the margin, 'tasted the word of God that it is good,' though the translation in the text is quite defensible. 'The word of God' is the gospel message. 'Good' is literally 'beautiful.' In Zech. i. 13 we have the expression 'good words, *even* comfortable words.'

and the powers of the age to come. Perhaps we should translate here, 'And the powers of the age to come that they are good.' The writer is thinking of 'the age to come,' which, while future to us, yet exists in heaven simultaneously with this age and has now begun to send forth powers into it, which those feel who ideally belong to the age to come, and in this age confess themselves to be strangers and pilgrims. It is not necessary to think exclusively or even mainly of miraculous 'gifts.'

6. and then fell away. This does not refer to the commission of even the grossest acts of sin, but to deliberate apostasy. This is the danger that looms before the readers (cf. x. 26–31). The writer is not alarming them with a description of something which cannot happen; he is in deadly earnest because the peril is so real.

it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. The author seems to have in view a practical impossibility, lying rather in the nature of the case than in any Divinely imposed necessity. Those, who from Judaism have passed to Christianity, have learned its fundamental truths and experienced its redeeming powers, and have then relapsed into Judaism, have done so with a clear consciousness and a deliberate choice, which is likely to be final. They identify themselves with those who crucified the Son of God, and do so after they have had such full experience of his grace. There is a change in tense with 'renew' from the aorist to a present. Rendall translates 'to keep renewing,' and

ance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the land 7

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explains that it is impossible to keep indefinitely renewing those who meanwhile are continually crucifying the Son of God. But the author has not in mind repeated falling met by repeated renewal, but a single act of apostasy followed by a continuous crucifying of Christ, in the course of which no renewal was possible. The tense of 'fell away' shews that a single act is contemplated, and this is inconsistent with renewal again and again. Westcott defines 'repentance' as 'a complete change of mind consequent upon the apprehension of the true moral nature of things.' He adds: 'It follows necessarily that in this large sense there can be no second' repentance. He thinks that there may be 'a regaining of the lost view with the consequent restoration of the fulness of life, but this is different from the freshness of vision through which the life is first realized.' But the warning is eviscerated of its solemnity if the writer means that, while the vividness of their first impression cannot be restored, they may regain their full Christian experience. At the same time he is contemplating the possibility of renewal from the point of view of the resources of the Divinely appointed human agency. Hence he does not say that it is impossible that they should be renewed. God may work outside the self-imposed normal limits.

seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh. As thus translated the reason is given why it is impossible to renew them. They have made themselves accomplices of those who crucified Christ. The margin is preferred by many, 'the while they crucify.' In this case the meaning would be that it is impossible to renew them while they continue to crucify to themselves the Son of God. The difficulty in this explanation is that it is mere commonplace to say that men cannot be renewed while they crucify Christ. It is true that there is a change in tense from 'fell away' to 'crucify.' But this is natural, for one expresses the initial act and the other the state of apostasy. This applies also against the view of Edwards that crucifying afresh is to be distinguished from falling away. As Bruce well points out, the author must mean something more serious than that falling away is fatal, when it amounts to crucifying Christ. The word translated 'crucify afresh' may also mean 'crucify,' but probably the former was what the author meant. 'To themselves' may mean to their own ruin, or by their own wilful act, or so as to make him dead to them, as Paul says he is crucified to the world. Christ is called 'the Son of God' to emphasize the heinousness of their act. They treat him as a blaspheming pretender to Messiahship.

put him to an open shame. The word is suggested by the

which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and
bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is
8 also tilled, receiveth blessing from God: but if it beareth
thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse;
whose end is to be burned.
9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you,

shameful publicity of the cross. They openly renounce him before the world, and proclaim him worthy of his death.

7, 8. The danger is illustrated by the figure of two fields, which have received abundant rain, one of which brings forth abundantly and wins the blessing of God, while the other perverts the fertilizing showers into the production of thorns and thistles. Cf. Isaiah's parable of the vineyard, Isa. v. and Browning's—

> 'While sweet dews turn to the gourd's hurt
> And bloat, and while they bloat it, blast.'

Apparently both are tilled, and both are treated alike by heaven. No light is thrown on the reason for the difference in the results. The peril of the readers is that they may be like the thistle-bearing field, cursed by God and destroyed by fire. They have enjoyed great privileges, which should save them from a thankless rejection of Christ. The reference to thorns and thistles and the cursed ground is perhaps suggested by Gen. iii. 17, 18.

8. nigh unto a curse: a softening of what might have been expected.

whose end is to be burned. Probably the reference in 'whose' is not to 'curse,' so that the meaning would be that the curse would issue in burning, but to 'land,' its end is destruction by fire. So far as the figure itself goes there seems to be no allusion to fire from heaven, but to the setting of the field on fire by the farmer. The meaning of the parable is that apostasy leads to ruin.

vi. 9–12. *Past and future.* The readers' noble past warrants the hope of their salvation, for God will not forget their love to the saints. Let them shew the same zeal and imitate those who inherit the promises.

9. After this severe reproof and still severer warning, the writer hastens to assure his readers that he has better hopes for them than his words might imply. There was much in their past history to justify him in this, especially their loving ministry to the saints. If they thus cared for Christ's followers, there was good reason to be confident that they would hold fast to Christ himself.

beloved. Occurs very fitly here, though here only in the Epistle.

and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak: for God is not unrighteous to forget your work 10
and the love which ye shewed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister. And 11
we desire that each one of you may shew the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: that ye be not 12

we are persuaded. The tense implies a settled conviction, 'we have become and are persuaded.'

better things: probably has reference both to their spiritual condition and their future destiny, but primarily to the latter, as verse 10 shews.

things that accompany salvation. This phrase defines 'better things' as things which stand in close connexion with 'salvation,' that is will lead to it. For 'accompany' the margin gives 'are near to.'

thus speak: as in v. 11—vi. 8.

10. God is not unrighteous. God rewards all men according to their works, and therefore cannot leave unrecognized the kindness they have shewn to His people (cf. Matt. x. 42) without being untrue to Himself.

ye shewed. The term suggests a definite occasion, probably that referred to in x. 32–34. At the same time their loving ministry still continues.

toward his name: kindness to saints who bear His name is kindness to Him.

the saints. There is no need to identify this ministry to the saints with collections made for Jerusalem Christians. 'The saints' means in some cases the Christians of Jerusalem, but the context makes the reference clear in those cases. It would therefore be unsafe to infer from this passage that the letter was not sent to Jerusalem.

11, 12. Conclusion of the exhortation, in which the writer urges his readers to shew the same zeal to secure the fullness of hope that they shewed in practical kindness, so that they may be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Similarly in x. 32–39 a severe warning against apostasy is followed by a reference to the church's noble past, and emphasis on the need of endurance and faith.

11. we desire. The word expresses intense desire, 'we long.'

each one of you. The writer's thought rests on each individual. He was intimately acquainted with the circumstances of the church, and probably had special individuals in mind (cf. x. 25).

unto the fulness of hope even to the end. 'Unto' means in

sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, since he

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order to attain, and the emphasis lies on the words 'unto the fulness of hope.' For the author does not mean that the readers should continue to shew to the end the same zeal as hitherto, but to be as zealous in gaining a full hope and holding it fast to the end as they had been in ministering to the saints. The margin 'full assurance' is less probable.

sluggish: the same word as is translated 'dull' in v. 11. There it refers to intellectual sluggishness, here to a relaxing grip of the Christian hope.

of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. He may have specially in mind the men of faith of the Old Covenant, many of whom are enumerated in the eleventh chapter. The present tense is, however, opposed to the past reference, and Christian believers may be included. But more probably the author means of such as those who thus inherit the promises. 'Patience,' literally 'long-suffering,' is shewn in face of long delay; the 'patience' spoken of in x. 36, xii. 1 is 'endurance' in face of trials. The inheritance is received on earth by that faith which lifts us into the world to come, but in reality when we pass within the veil, or the veil itself is removed by the Second Coming. The mention of the 'promises' prepares the way for the next paragraph.

vi. 13–20. *The oath of God.* God's promise to Abraham was confirmed with an oath, which he sware by Himself; and since it is thus doubly immutable, we are encouraged to lay hold on the hope, which is an anchor cast within the veil, through which Jesus has entered as our forerunner and high-priest after the order of Melchizedek.

The writer shews from the case of Abraham that we may hold fast our hope in spite of delay (cf. Hab. ii. 3, 4 and Heb. x. 35–39). For God not only promised but confirmed His promise by an oath, and thus made assurance doubly sure. And so our hope binds us firmly to the world to come, which Jesus has entered as our forerunner and Melchizedek high-priest. The aim of the section is practical rather than theological, for the author wishes to encourage his readers to steadfastness by reminding them of the certainty of the promised inheritance.

when God made promise. According to this translation the oath is uttered at the same time as the promise. Several translate 'having made promise,' and explain that the promises made before were now confirmed by oath. It is interesting to compare Paul's

could swear by none greater, he sware by himself, saying, 14
Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will
multiply thee. And thus, having patiently endured, he 15
obtained the promise. For men swear by the greater: 16

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treatment of the promise in the elaborate arguments of Galatians and Romans. The promise is, however, not that quoted here, but 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'

since he could swear by none greater. The underlying thought is that one who utters an oath swears by a higher power, invoking its vengeance on falsehood or pledging its veracity, in order to give a force to his words that his own personality cannot give them. But there is no higher to whom God can appeal. We should naturally infer that He would utter no oath. But He condescends to make Himself, so to speak, His superior by whom He swears, 'By myself have I sworn' (Gen. xxii. 16). Philo speaks similarly.

14. The quotation is from Gen. xxii. 17, substituting 'multiply thee' for 'multiply thy seed.'

blessing I will bless thee: a translation of a Hebrew idiom expressing emphasis, 'I will indeed bless thee.'

15. having patiently endured. This represents the verb of the noun translated 'patience' in verse 12. He maintained his confidence in spite of long and perplexing delay.

he obtained the promise. The promise is that of a great posterity, for whether it was first given or only confirmed in the sworn promise quoted in verse 14, that promise gives the substance of it. Some think that the writer merely means that Abraham had the promise made to him. But probably he means that in some sense he obtained the fulfilment of it. In his lifetime this was very partial, Isaac was restored to him, and Jacob and Esau were born. But to the eye of faith this was realization. The promise which the fathers did not receive (xi. 39) is not identical with this which Abraham did receive.

6. The author states a general principle as to the oaths of men. They swear by the greater and meet gainsaying with an oath, which confirms their word and removes unbelief. Philo argues similarly.

men swear by the greater. Emphasis lies on 'men' and 'theirs,' such is the case with *men*; but how surprising that *God* should submit to it! 'The greater' probably means God, because an oath by a lower power would not have the same finality. But he says 'greater' because he is insisting that God swore although He had no superior, and since He had no superior swore by Himself.

and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for con-
17 firmation. Wherein God, being minded to shew more
abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability
18 of his counsel, interposed with an oath: that by two
immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to
lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled

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dispute, or 'gainsaying.' When a statement is contested, opposition is silenced if it is reaffirmed with an oath. Perjury is supposed to be excluded by fear of the Divine vengeance 'Confirmation' is a technical term for a legal guarantee.

17. Wherein does not refer to 'oath' but to the preceding sentence, 'this being so.'

interposed with an oath. This does not bring out the force of the original, which literally means 'mediated with an oath.' Men in their dealings with each other, when they swear by God make Him a third party, who stands between them to guarantee the engagement or certify the promise. But since God is one of the contracting parties He cannot call in a higher to assure the truth of His promise. Therefore He makes Himself the third party between Himself and Abraham (see on verse 13). Thus in the 'Song of Hezekiah' the poet appeals to God, his creditor, to be his surety for him to God. So, too, Job appeals from God his persecutor to God his vindicator. The oath here is apparently not that referred to in verses 13–15, for the illustration of Abraham is left behind and the author is dealing with a promise which is an encouragement to us. What is in his mind seems to be the oath establishing Christ as priest after the order of Melchizedek, though the fact that this promise was an oath is not mentioned till vii. 20, 21, and Ps. cx. 4 does not say that God swore by Himself. This would be regarded as true of any oath of God, and 'immutability' is well illustrated by 'and will not repent' in Ps. cx. 4.

18. two immutable things: the promise and the oath of God. The promise was itself immutable and therefore needed no confirmation, but the oath gives double assurance to our incredulity.

we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope. With this translation the meaning is that we, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the object of our hope, may receive strong encouragement. This is probably correct, though it is possible to translate 'we who have fled for refuge, may have strong encouragement to hold fast our hope.' It is in favour of this second view that we keep the same translation 'hold fast' instead of 'lay hold,' as in iv. 14, and 'hope' thus retains its sense of confident expectation, not the object of hope, but the latter sense is strongly suggested by 'set before us.'

for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us; which 19
we have as an anchor of the soul, *a hope* both sure and
stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil;
whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having be- 20
come a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Against it is the order of the words, and the harshness of leaving 'who have fled for refuge' isolated.

19. Although the word 'anchor' does not occur in the O.T., it is a frequent symbol of hope in classical writers. Probably we should not insert *a hope* as the English Version does, but regard the rest of the verse as describing the anchor. It is true that 'entering' is a less natural word than 'cast' would have been; otherwise the metaphor is not difficult, and there is no need to sink to the prosaic literalism of regarding the anchor as cast upwards through the heavenly ocean ('the waters above the firmament') into heaven itself. The key to the author's thought is the doctrine of the two ages. We still live in this age, our inheritance lies in the age to come. Yet we are not wholly cut off from it, for while we do not possess it, we are bound firmly to it by an absolutely certain confidence, which rests on the unchanging faithfulness of God. We need such a confidence, because between this world and the world to come lies a veil, which conceals our inheritance from our view. Hence the possibility of doubt and unbelief by which we might drift away (ii. 1). The Christian hope anchors us to our moorings. It is important to remember that the thought of the two ages underlies not merely the doctrinal exposition but the exhortation. It is generally recognized that both have the same practical aim, and so far unity is recognized in the Epistle. What is often overlooked is that the exhortations rest on the same speculative principle as the argumentative portion, and thus the Epistle has a unity of another kind. This is the case with the treatment of faith as well as of hope. That the writer skilfully brings this warning back to the point at which his argument broke off is true; but we must not forget that this was made the more natural by this unifying conception.

20. We have not only the guarantee of God's promise and oath, but the entrance of Jesus within the veil. Since he is our leader and we share his destiny, his entrance within the veil is the pledge that we too shall follow him into the heavenly inheritance. Of no earthly high-priest could it be said that he went within the veil as forerunner of the people. He went in alone, and left it to return to them. But Jesus has entered, not simply as our leader, but as our high-priest. It was this

7 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God

which suggested the metaphor of the veil, since the ministry of the high-priest reached its climax in his entry within the veil on the Day of Atonement. The thought thus comes to expression that within the veil lie both the inheritance and the mercy-seat. The mercy-seat was that place on earth where the presence of God was most intensely manifested. The blood of the victim was therefore applied to it by the high-priest on the Day of Atonement in order to bring it into most immediate contact with God. The sacrifice symbolized the renewal of the communion of God with Israel, which had been interrupted by sin. The great religious idea of the Epistle is that Christianity provides perfect communion with God through the priestly work of Christ in the heavenly Holy of Holies. Now in the double truth that within the veil this work is accomplished and our inheritance is to be found, the deep thought is expressed that our heavenly inheritance is essentially our fellowship with God. The religious interest dominates the whole Epistle ; its cardinal thought is that unhindered fellowship with God is the highest good ; its great argument for the truth of Christianity is that it perfectly solves the hitherto insoluble problem of securing it. Jesus, however, has accomplished this great work because his high-priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek. Thus the writer returns to the point he had reached in v. 10. Now he feels that he may proceed to expound this difficult doctrine.

vii. The writer has shewn in v. 1–10 that Christ is a true high-priest, and asserted that his high-priesthood was after the order of Melchizedek. So far he has developed no proof that his priesthood is superior to that of Aaron, but has simply shewn that he is a true priest though not of the line of Aaron. The priesthood of Melchizedek is recognized in Genesis, the Melchizedek priesthood of the Messiah in Psalm cx. In drawing out the significance of the O. T. narrative and prophecy the author argues not merely from the statements but also from the silence of Scripture. In this he follows the Alexandrian method, which regarded the silence of Scripture as suggestive. Two points, however, should be borne in mind. While Melchizedek is discussed in Philo, his significance, as Bleek points out, is treated in a purely incidental manner. And the argument from the silence of Scripture is not arbitrary, but rests on a phenomenon that must have seemed surprising to a student of Genesis.

vii. 1–3. *Melchizedek.* This Melchizedek, king of righteousness and king of peace, who had no ancestry, no birth or death, who blessed Abraham after he had smitten the kings, and received tithes from him, has a perpetual priesthood.

Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, to whom also 2
Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King

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For. The main sentence is 'For this Melchizedek abideth a priest continually.' The connexion with vi. 20 is, Jesus is a high-priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, for his is an abiding priesthood. The emphasis lies on 'for ever,' and this unending priesthood, which is expressly stated of the subject of Psalm cx, is inferred with reference to Melchizedek from the fact that no successor is named in Scripture.

king of Salem, priest of God Most High. The priesthood of Melchizedek had two essential characteristics: it was eternal and it was royal. A priest after the order of Melchizedek is not only a priest for ever, but he is a king-priest. That Christ is king, as well as prophet and priest, is recognized by the author, especially in the earlier part of the Epistle. But he does not dwell on it, perhaps for prudential reasons, to avoid the suspicion of treason. 'Salem' is probably Jerusalem (cf. Ps. lxxvi. 2). The latter name, in the form Uru-Salim, is now known to be very ancient, since it is found in the Tell el-Amarna tablets, which date from about 1400 B.C. Its meaning is said by Haupt to be 'Place of Safety' (in Cheyne's edition of the Hebrew text of Isaiah in *The Sacred Books of the Old Testament*, p. 100). The argument that the early name of Jerusalem was Jebus cannot therefore be pressed against the identification. 'Jebus' was probably formed from 'Jebusites.' In the time of Jerome, Salem was identified with a town south of Scythopolis. 'God Most High': properly El Elyon, who is identified by the narrator with Yahweh, the Possessor of heaven and earth (Gen. xiv. 19–22).

returning from the slaughter of the kings. Mentioned to recall the occasion, but specially to point out that Abraham, when Melchizedek met him, was returning from the defeat of a great army, which had carried through a victorious campaign. In that proud moment, flushed with conquest and laden with spoil, he confessed Melchizedek as his superior, and recognized his priesthood by giving him tithes. 'Slaughter' should perhaps be translated 'smiting.'

2. King of righteousness. The original meaning of Melchizedek is probably 'My king is Ṣidiq,' just as Adonizedek means 'My lord is Ṣidiq,' Ṣidiq being the name of a deity. But the interpretation given here is one that would naturally be assigned to the name. Josephus explains it as 'righteous king.' Its significance is seen by comparing it with the words addressed to the

3 of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually.

Son, 'The sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom' (i. 8).

King of peace. In this interpretation the author had been preceded by Philo. The reference is probably to Isaiah's description of the Messiah as Prince of Peace, which also asserted that his kingdom should have no end, and should be upheld with judgement and righteousness. The two qualities of 'righteousness' and 'peace' must be combined in a perfect priest.

3. The author, as Philo often does, builds an argument on the silence of Scripture. Nothing is said in Genesis of the parentage or ancestry, of the birth or death of Melchizedek, hence the writer infers that he had neither father, mother, nor pedigree, was neither born nor did he die. While such an inference must seem alien to our modes of interpretation, the author had more justification in drawing it than might be imagined. In Genesis great importance is attached to genealogies, to birth and death, and the absence of any such information with reference to so great a personage as Melchizedek may well have seemed full of mysterious import. It is not really surprising, for these genealogies occur for the most part in the Priestly Document, to which Gen. xiv. does not belong. Further, the whole title of the Levitical priests to their office rested on their descent from Levi. Thus Melchizedek stands in emphatic contrast to them, in that his priesthood does not rest on ancestry. On the page of Scripture Melchizedek stands as he is here described. We need not take the passage more literally than this.

made like unto the Son of God: in that he was 'without beginning of days or end of life.' The Son is really eternal, and the silence of Scripture assimilates Melchizedek to him. Since it is clear that eternity is a quality that cannot really be copied, this involving a contradiction in terms, it is obvious that we are not to think of Melchizedek as really unbeginning. Further, while the priesthood of Melchizedek is the archetype of the priesthood of Christ, the relation is reversed in what constitutes the qualities of being. Melchizedek is made like to the Son of God, who existed before him.

abideth a priest continually. This is inferred from the fact that no successor is mentioned. It is a little strange that the writer should insist on the perpetual priesthood of Melchizedek, for he cannot have meant to assert any permanent priesthood alongside of Christ's. Really he wished to insist on the per-

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom 4
Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief
spoils. And they indeed of the sons of Levi that receive 5
the priest's office have commandment to take tithes of
the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren,
though these have come out of the loins of Abraham:
but he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath 6
taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath

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manence of Christ's priesthood, and therefore found in that of Melchizedek not simply a royal but also a perpetual character.

vii. 4–10. *Melchizedek greater than Abraham.* How great the man must be to whom even Abraham paid tithes. The priests of the tribe of Levi take tithes from their brethren, but he though no Levite took tithes from Abraham, and by blessing him proved his superiority. While Levites die he lives, and, so to speak, Levi himself in Abraham paid tithes to him.

4. The author calls attention to the greatness of Melchizedek, as shewn by the fact that one so distinguished as Abraham the patriarch gave him a tenth of the booty, and indeed selected it from the best of the spoil. In the Greek 'the patriarch' is placed for emphasis at the end.

5, 6. The Jewish priests receive tithes from the descendants of Abraham, because, though they are their brethren, they are empowered to do so by the law; but Melchizedek, though he has no priesthood recognized by the law, received tithes from Abraham himself. Further, he gave him his blessing, and the man he blessed, held a position of lofty spiritual privilege; he had received the promises.

5. that receive the priest's office. According to the law the Levites took tithes from the people, and the priests took from the Levites a tithe of the tithe they had received. Indirectly therefore the priests took tithes of their brother Israelites. Since the author expressly refers to the law, and indeed argues always from it, the alleged direct tithing of the people by the priests in the post-exilic period, even if it could be proved, can have no bearing on the interpretation of this passage.

their brethren. The priests have no natural pre-eminence over those whose tithes they receive, but one that is purely legal. With Melchizedek the case was different. No law compelled Abraham to pay him tithes. His action was the spontaneous recognition of his spiritual worth.

hath taken tithes. The tense gives a character of permanence to the act, and similarly 'hath blessed.'

7 the promises. But without any dispute the less is blessed
8 of the better. And here men that die receive tithes;
but there one, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.
9 And, so to say, through Abraham even Levi, who re-
10 ceiveth tithes, hath paid tithes; for he was yet in the
loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.
11 Now if there was perfection through the Levitical
priesthood (for under it hath the people received the

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7. Since he who blesses is greater than he who is blessed, it is clear that, great though Abraham was, Melchizedek was even greater.

8. Further, while the Jewish priests are mortal men, Melchizedek has an immortal life.

here: in the case of the historical priesthood.

it is witnessed: in the silence of Genesis, not in the assertion of Ps. cx. 4, which refers to the priest after his order.

9, 10. Since Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek before Isaac was begotten, he contained Isaac and his descendants still within him, and they may be said in a manner to have shared in his act. Thus the tribe of Levi, by paying tithes to Melchizedek, confessed the inferiority of its priesthood. The author is conscious that the argument may seem forced, hence he introduces it with 'so to speak.' But it expresses one form of the deep truth of solidarity, the act of the ancestor commits the descendants.

vii. 11–19. *The Levitical priesthood superseded.* The introduction of a new priesthood implies the imperfection of the old. Change of priesthood involves change of law, for the law knows no priest of the tribe of Judah to which our Lord belonged. The new priest is not created by a weak, sensuous law which could bring nothing to perfection, but by the power of an indissoluble life; and the law gives way to a hope, by which we draw near to God.

11. The main argument of the verse seems to be: The Levitical priesthood did not secure perfection, for if it had done so there would have been no need for a Melchizedek priest. The very fact that Scripture announces the rise of a new order proves that the old did not reach the end which a priesthood is designed to attain—to bring about the removal of sin and free fellowship with God. The parenthetical statement 'for under it hath the people received the law' indicates that the Levitical priesthood is the basis on which the law was established. If it had been a subsidiary detail of the law, its imperfection might have been overlooked,

law), what further need *was there* that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood 12
being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are said 13
belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our 14

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but it was the foundation of the whole religious constitution of Israel, and failure here was radical and irremediable. In verse 19 this inability to secure 'perfection' is attributed to the law.

not be reckoned after the order of Aaron. Perhaps it would be better to translate 'be reckoned not after the order of Aaron'; that is, to be reckoned as a non-Aaronic priest. Priesthood after the order of Aaron and priesthood after the order of Melchizedek are mutually exclusive.

12. How urgent was the need of change is clear from the fact that it is effected in spite of the necessary change of the law. The law contemplated a Levitical priesthood and no other, and since further it was the basis on which the law itself rested, to annul it is to annul the law in which it is fundamental. How serious then must have been the defect of the priesthood, since it had to be set aside at so great a cost as the annulling of the law! Root and branch alike must be destroyed, since not only is it inferior in point of status, but ineffective to secure the purpose for which it was established. For 'of the law' we have in the margin 'of law.'

13, 14. That the Levitical priesthood is to be abolished is made clear by the fact that he of whom the Psalmist speaks, does not belong to Levi but another tribe. For Jesus has arisen from the tribe of Judah, a tribe in which the law recognizes no priests.

13. belongeth: as is suggested by the margin 'hath partaken of' the same word is used as is found in ii. 14, and the reference is to the Incarnation and the permanent participation in the tribe of Judah resulting from it.

14. it is evident. Probably the meaning is that Christ's origin from Judah is a notorious fact. It is possible that the statement may be a theological inference: Jesus belongs to Judah, because the Messiah is the son of David. When von Soden says, 'The origin from Judah (vii. 14; so Rev. v. 5) undoubtedly goes back to Num. xxiv. 17 and is Messianic dogma, not historical statement,' it is difficult to follow him. It is quite likely, as several scholars think, that the phrase 'hath sprung' is influenced by Num. xxiv. 17, but this passage says nothing whatever about

Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses
15 spake nothing concerning priests. And *what we say* is
yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of
16 Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who hath been
made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but

Judah. And while it cannot be proved that the Davidic descent was not an inference from the Messiahship of Jesus, it may yet be pointed out that it rests on early testimony (Rom. i. 3; Mark x. 47; Acts ii. 29-31. Even Schmiedel, who discredits the early history in Acts and especially the speeches, admits that 'it is hardly possible not to believe that this Christology of the speeches of Peter must have come from a primitive source.' But, if so, why not the reference to the Davidic sonship?)

our Lord. It is interesting that this title, now so common, occurs elsewhere in the N. T. only in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. i. 14; 2 Tim. i. 8) and in the second Epistle of Peter (iii. 15).

hath sprung. This word is used generally with reference to the rising of sun or star, and that may be the meaning here, especially if Num. xxiv. 17 is in the author's mind. But the metaphor may be that of a plant springing from the ground.

out of Judah. The royal tribe, from which the Messiah was to spring.

15. It is uncertain what precise point the writer is proving. Clearly it is not that Jesus does not belong to Levi. But it may be either that the law is set aside, or that the Levitical priesthood brought nothing to perfection. Probably it is the latter, for this is the main thought in his mind, and verse 16 suggests the reason for it.

more abundantly evident. The word translated 'evident' is different from, though cognate to, that so translated in verse 14. It is a stronger word, suggesting perhaps an irresistible conclusion rather than a notorious fact.

after the likeness. The same phrase occurs in iv. 15, where it is translated 'like as *we are*.' Here it is used instead of the more usual phrase 'after the order of.' It points to personal rather than official qualities as constituting the type of priesthood. Cf. 'made like unto the Son of God' (verse 3).

16. not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 'Endless' is literally 'indissoluble,' which would have been better taken into the text. 'Law' is opposed to 'power,' and 'fleshen commandment' to 'indissoluble life.' The Levitical priesthood depended on external law, the priesthood of Jesus on inward spiritual energy. Further, this law was 'of a fleshen commandment.' By 'commandment' is meant not

after the power of an endless life: for it is witnessed 17
of him,

Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.

For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment 18

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the whole law, but that which established and regulated the priesthood. The translation 'carnal' is unfortunate, as its associations give a false impression. The term is employed because, under the law, the priesthood was a matter of physical descent, and, indeed, the other qualifications for it were physical. But Melchizedek had no genealogy; his priesthood, and that after his order, rested not on the accident of birth, but on intrinsic worth. The flesh stands for the weak and perishable, and thus the fleshen priesthood came to an end with death. But that of Jesus was filled with 'the power of an indissoluble life.' And by this the author does not mean that his priesthood began after his death. He means more than that, that it is of a character not to be touched by death, lying in a region far above its reach. A non-moral, physical priesthood must perish with physical dissolution, but one that is spiritual is above the accidents of time and space. The quality of that life is that it cannot be dissolved.

17. The quotation supports the reference to 'the likeness of Melchizedek' (verse 15) and 'the indissoluble life' (verse 16).

18, 19. The commandment ordaining the priesthood is abolished because it was weak and profitless, and in place of it a better hope is introduced by which we draw near to God. The commandment in its profitless character is just of a piece with the whole law, for this could bring nothing to completion, or reach the goal that was set before it. The weakness of the commandment lay in its inability to bring men near to God. So far from doing this it carefully fenced off the ways of approach to Him, permitted such access as it was able to give only with elaborate precautions against violating His sanctity, and to rigidly selected officials, and, even so, failed to come into real contact with Him. In place of this futile machinery, Christianity gives us a 'better hope.' Though it be only a hope and not a realization, it is yet one which enters within the veil and binds us fast to the world to come. And thus we can draw nigh to God. Since the essence of religion is communion with God, Christianity which secures this for us is a better religion than Judaism, which does not.

18. disannulling: a stronger and less conciliatory word than 'change' in verse 12. It was a technical term in law.

foregoing: indicating its preliminary and therefore temporary character.

19 because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law
made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of
a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God.
20 And inasmuch as *it is* not without the taking of an oath

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weakness. It is interesting to see how different are the views of Paul and the author in a point where, formally, they touch. Paul, too, speaks of the law as weak through the flesh (Rom. viii. 3; cf. Gal. iv. 9). But his thought rests almost exclusively on the moral, that of the author on the ritual, law. To Paul the weakness of the law is revealed in its inability to pass sentence on sin in the flesh, so as to free man from its dominion; to the author in its inability to remove guilt from the conscience and thus bring him nigh to God. And Paul calls it weak through the flesh, because the flesh (by which he does not mean the body) is the home and instrument of sin, while the author attributes a fleshen character to it, because it moves exclusively in the region of the physical.

unprofitableness: *lit.* 'unhelpfulness,' because it cannot fulfil the object it was meant to serve, the bringing of men near to God.

19. (**for the law made nothing perfect**). This is rightly regarded as a parenthesis, extending to the law in general what is asserted of the commandment (cf. verse 11).

a better hope. It is not clear whether a contrast is intended between a hope given by the commandment and that given in Christianity. If so, the question arises, What hope was this? It may be that of temporal prosperity, or perhaps of drawing near to God, in Christianity a better founded hope. But perhaps the 'better hope' is contrasted with the 'commandment' itself.

vii. 20–28. *The priesthood of Christ.* Unlike the priests of the law, Jesus has been made priest with an oath, and has thus become surety of a better covenant. While they are many by reason of death, he remains sole priest for ever in his order, and thus, ever living to intercede, can save to the uttermost. Such a sinless high-priest was suited to our case, who has no daily need to offer, like the infirm priests of the law, but, a Son perfect for ever, offered himself as a sacrifice once for all.

20–22. While the Levitical priesthood has not, that of Jesus has, been constituted with an oath, and he has become the surety of a proportionately better covenant. There is no mention of an oath in connexion with the establishment of the Levitical priesthood, but the priesthood of Christ was inaugurated by the Divine oath of Ps. cx. 4. And this oath indicates a settled determination on the part of God, of which He will not repent. He pledges Himself to its fulfilment. A priesthood thus constituted must be

(for they indeed have been made priests without an oath ; 21
but he with an oath by him that saith of him,

The Lord sware and will not repent himself,

Thou art a priest for ever) ;

by so much also hath Jesus become the surety of a better 22
covenant. And they indeed have been made priests 23
many in number, because that by death they are hindered
from continuing : but he, because he abideth for ever, 24
hath his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also he 25

for ever. It is permanent ; the Levitical priesthood transitory. And thus the covenant which rests upon it must be better. But the thought of the covenant is not here developed. As his manner is, the author drops the word by the way, intending to speak fully of it later.

21. by him that saith of him. God, not the Psalmist. For 'by' the margin gives 'through,' and for 'of him' it gives 'unto him.'

22. surety. The word occurs elsewhere neither in the N. T. nor in the Greek O. T. It is found twice in the Apocrypha. There seems to be no reference to the thought that Christ is a surety for man to God. All that is said in the passage is that he guarantees the covenant to us. For 'covenant' the margin gives 'testament'; see note on ix. 16, 17.

23–25. The Jewish priesthood is subject to all the vicissitudes of death, and therefore numerous priests have been required to carry on its functions, but the priesthood of Jesus does not pass to another, because he abides a priest for ever. And thus he is able to save completely, since he ever lives to intercede for his people.

23. priests many in number. He does not refer to the many priests who held office at the same time, by which provision was made against the cessation of the priesthood through death. He is thinking of the long line of high-priests, each severed one from the other by death. In contrast to this broken chain stands the continuous priesthood of Christ. Multiplicity is replaced by unity.

continuing : not 'in life' as some take it, for this is too obvious, but 'in office.'

24. unchangeable : a word of very uncertain meaning. It is taken either in a passive or an active sense. If passive, it means 'inviolable' (marg.), 'unchangeable.' If active, the meaning is, as in the margin, 'that doth not pass to another.' The latter seems to give a more appropriate sense, but it is doubtful if the word bears this meaning.

25. Wherefore : since his priesthood is of the character described.

is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless,

to the uttermost: the margin 'completely' gives the sense, though the text brings out better the force of the word. The reference is not to time, but to extent. He is able to save to the furthest reaches of life and character, and finds no element intractable to his hand. Had it been otherwise he could not have been a priest for ever. His priesthood would have been inadequate, and therefore must have given place to another, unless God were to acquiesce in defeat.

them that draw near unto God through him. Definition of those whom he is able thus to save. Those who enter into communion with God through him as their Mediator, he is able to save completely. It is only 'through him' that we can draw near.

seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. His unbroken life is the condition of his being 'able to save,' his 'intercession' is the means he employs. The intercession is not identical with the offering, for the one is continuously presented, the other once for all. But it implies it. Into every act of intercession the whole weight of the offering is put, and thus no limits can be set to his power to save. Intercession is most naturally explained as appeal to God for forgiveness and grace (iv. 16). What lends intensity to his pleading is his realization through experience of the awful pressure of temptation. So Paul says of the Spirit that He 'maketh intercession for *us* with groanings that cannot be uttered' (Rom. viii. 26). In the same chapter he speaks of Christ's intercession for us. What form Christ's intercession takes is, of course, to us quite unthinkable. Our English word suggests too exclusively the sense 'plead for.' The Greek word includes this thought, but is more general, and means 'to transact on behalf of.' At the same time intercession seems to be the dominant idea. Philo speaks of the Logos as interceding with God. But intercessory angels were known to Jewish theology.

26-28. These verses apparently are not meant to present a fresh argument for the superiority of the priesthood of Christ to the Levitical, but a rapid summary of the qualities which made him a high-priest adequate to our need; yet new and important points emerge, to be treated more fully later. These are, that he made one offering and one only, and that this offering was himself. It is also noteworthy that here we have those qualities enumerated in which he differs from men, while in ii. 17, 18 and partially in iv. 15, v. 7, 8 his participation in their moral experience is asserted as among his qualifications for high-priesthood.

undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than

26. such a high priest: that is, such as described in the previous section from iv. 14, but including also ii. 17, 18. By giving the phrase this comprehensive reference we include in it the qualities the writer proceeds to mention. Some attach much significance to the use of 'high priest' here instead of priest. It is argued that, having set forth Christ as priest after the order of Melchizedek, he now sets him forth as high-priest after this order. Since Melchizedek was not a high-priest but only a priest, not he but Aaron is thought to be the type of Christ as high-priest. The distinction seems to be artificial. Westcott, who defends this view, says: 'Nothing is said in Scripture of the high-priesthood of Melchizedek, or of any sacrifices which he offered.' As to the former of these points, it may be said that when the writer is drawing out what is implied in the narrative of Melchizedek and the oracle in Ps. cx. 4 as it affects Christ, he speaks of Christ as priest, because in both Melchizedek was so described. But when he detaches his exposition from the statements of Genesis and the Psalm, he uses the more congenial term high-priest. But he does not mean to assert any difference between the two. It is true that his account of Christ's high-priestly work is largely controlled by the Levitical ritual; what Christ did corresponds to what Aaron is represented as doing. But that is because the whole Levitical order is a copy of a heavenly original, and we know the latter through our study of the former. In this sense Aaron is a type of Christ. And since Christ's sacerdotal acts are described for the most part in symbolism borrowed from the ritual of the Day of Atonement, in which the high-priest was sole actor, this title is naturally used of Christ by preference. But whether described by one or the other, his office is after the order of Melchizedek, and the use of now this and now that seems to be due to no essential difference, but to the reasons already mentioned. It is further true that Scripture says nothing of any sacrifice offered by Melchizedek. But it would be precarious to argue that the writer thought of him as a non-sacrificing priest, for he would probably have regarded the phrase as a contradiction in terms (see note on v. 10). It is also difficult to believe that, if this distinction had been before his mind, he should have suppressed explicit reference to it. In verse 28 it seems to be implied that the word of the oath appointed the Son high-priest, yet 'priest' is the term actually used in Ps. cx. 4. This and the fact that the writer slips so naturally from one to the other confirm the view that he used them as synonymous.

became us: fitted our need.

holy, guileless, undefiled: the word translated 'holy' is rare in the N. T. It refers to intrinsic character in relation to

27 the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and

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God, whereas the word usually so translated expresses the idea of consecration to God. 'Guileless' occurs also in Rom. xvi. 18. It may mean 'without malice' or, more generally, 'without evil.' The translation 'guileless' seems less appropriate than the A.V. 'harmless.' 'Undefiled': free from any pollution which would incapacitate him from the work of his office. The Levitical high-priest could not act if any ceremonial defilement affected him. There is a tacit contrast between the qualifications for the high-priesthood in the two religions. The Levitical high-priest is such by physical descent and ritual correctness (cf. Lev. xxi, xxii), not in virtue of personal character. But the high-priest who is to suit our need is qualified by personal holiness, because his approach to God is real and not 'make-believe.'

separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: these two clauses should probably be taken together. The meaning of the former is not that Christ is separated from sinners by his sinlessness, but that he has been and is separated from them by removal to heaven. The high-priest spent the seven days preceding the Day of Atonement in the temple, so that he might be separated from contact with all that might defile him. The latter clause 'made higher than the heavens' describes the means by which the separation was effected. He has passed through the heavens (iv. 14), and has thus become higher than they. Eph. iv. 10, 'ascended far above all the heavens,' is a close parallel. Such a high-priest exalted to a position of highest dignity, pleading in the very presence of God, is the high-priest imperatively required by our need.

27. who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins **of the people.** This passage has caused great difficulty, since it seems to assert that the high-priest offered a daily sin-offering, whereas it was only on the Day of Atonement that he offered 'first for his own sins and then for the *sins* of the people.' The author is quite conscious that this was a yearly sacrifice (ix. 7, 25, x. 1, 3). It is true that there was a daily offering by the high-priest, but this was a meal-offering, not a sin-offering, and the actual offering was made by subordinates, except on Sabbaths and feast-days, when he officiated himself. Philo and the Talmud speak of a daily sacrifice offered by the high-priest. Are we then, as several scholars think, to assume an inaccuracy here? It seems unlikely that a writer so familiar with the O. T. ritual should have made such a mistake. Several solutions have been proposed. One is that we should explain 'daily' to mean 'yearly, on a definite day,'

then for the *sins* of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. For the law appointeth 28
men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the

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a highly improbable, if not impossible, sense. Others suggest that the author has somewhat inexactly blended the daily sacrifice with that of the Day of Atonement, taking 'daily' from one and the reference to sin from the other. Others explain that, while the high-priest actually offered for sin once in the year only, the pressure of necessity was daily felt, he had a daily need which found satisfaction once a year. This scarcely seems to do justice to the language, which is literally, 'who hath not daily necessity, as the high priests, to offer first for his own sins, then for those of the people.' There is a 'necessity' felt every day 'to offer.' Westcott thinks that while the work of Christ is carried on 'daily,' this work of intercession does not involve a daily offering. The high-priests presented themselves in the Holy of Holies once in the year and with a sacrifice. Since Christ presents himself continuously, if he needed a sacrifice it would be a daily and not an annual offering. In this case 'daily' must be restricted to Jesus and not refer at all to the high-priests. The order of the words supports this view, which is perhaps the most satisfactory.

first for his own sins: this was the order on the Day of Atonement (cf. v. 3).

this he did. The author cannot mean that Christ offered for his own sins, for he repeatedly insists on his sinlessness. On the view that Christ did make an offering for himself, the crying and tears mentioned in v. 7, see note on that passage. The difficulty is caused by the author's analysis of the high-priest's work into its constituent elements. If he had said simply to 'offer up sacrifices for sins,' there would have been no difficulty. This is all that he means when he says 'this he did.'

once for all: this is opposed to 'daily.' The single sacrifice is so full of efficacy that it needs no repetition. This thought is developed in ix. 25–28, x. 10–18; cf. ix. 12.

when he offered up himself. Here, for the first time, we have the great thought expressed that Jesus is not only the high-priest but also the victim. It is more fully expounded in ix. 11–14, 23–28, x. 5–14, 19, 20; cf. Eph. v, 2.

28. Restatement in a summary form of the ground of superiority. The law appoints as its high-priests men having infirmity (v. 2), the oath of Ps. cx. 4 appoints as high-priest a Son made perfect and abiding perfect for ever. On the one side we have law, a priesthood held by mere men, and many of them, of men encompassed with moral weakness, with life and priesthood alike cut short by death; on the other, the oath of God, His Son, one

oath, which was after the law, *appointeth* a Son, perfected for evermore.

8 Now in the things which we are saying the chief point

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and not many, Divine and not merely human, yet one whose Divinity has not shut him out from knowledge of our life, but who has attained perfection as man through moral training. It is only when perfection has been achieved that he becomes a high-priest.

which was after the law. The oracle in Ps. cx. 4 appointing a priest after the order of Melchizedek was later than the law which appointed the Levitical priests, and therefore superseded it. It is instructive to compare Paul's argument that the promise could not be cancelled by the law, though the latter was the later.

appointeth **a Son.** This can only mean that the word of the oath appoints a Son high-priest. But, if so, since that oracle speaks not of high-priest after the order of Melchizedek but of priest, it seems clear that for the writer there was no distinction between the two.

perfected for evermore. The tense expresses an act in the past with abiding results. For the perfecting of the Son cf. ii. 10. Because 'perfected for evermore' he abides a 'high-priest for ever.'

viii. 1–13. *The high-priest of the true sanctuary and mediator of the New Covenant.* Our high-priest ministers in the true sanctuary, for he must present an offering, but is not eligible to do so in the earthly sanctuary. His ministry is better just as he is mediator of a better covenant. For the first was not faultless or no need would have been felt for a second. The Scripture promise of a New Covenant, when the law should be written in the heart, when all should know him and their sin be remembered no more, antiquated the old and indicated its speedy disappearance.

The writer has completed his proof of the superiority of the priesthood of Christ to the Levitical. He now passes on to compare the two ministries. This falls into two divisions, which are somewhat interlaced in the exposition : the sanctuary in which he ministers, and the victim that he offers. But intimately connected with the better ministry is the new and better covenant thus established. The discussion of these three topics occupies viii. 1—x. 18.

1. Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this. The word translated 'chief point' is by many taken to mean 'summary.' So the margin 'Now to sum up what we are saying : We have,' &c. The objection to this is that the author does not proceed to summarize what he has been saying, but

is this: We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true 2 tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every 3 high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices:

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passes to a new point. Field translates excellently, 'Now to crown our present discourse.' What crowns the discourse is that which follows down to the end of the second verse.

We have such a high priest. The meaning may be such as already, or such as about to be, described. In favour of the former is the close parallel with vii. 26. It has the defect of throwing what follows into a subordinate position unsuitable to the crowning thought, so we should probably accept the latter view.

who sat down: cf. i. 3, where instead of 'in the heavens' we have 'on high.' Here 'of the throne' is also added.

2. The sanctuary in which our high-priest presented his offering, and in which he now sits as our minister, is in the heavens; it is a tabernacle pitched by God, not man, and therefore the true tabernacle. By 'true' is meant authentic, original, the genuine sanctuary of which the Mosaic tabernacle is but the copy and shadow. That such a true tabernacle exists in heaven is attested by Scripture, for Moses is bidden to copy it in every detail, to make all things according to the pattern shewn him in the mount. The Mosaic tabernacle with its ritual is thus the copy of a celestial archetype. It is obvious that the copy must be inferior to the original, and Judaism is stamped with this second-hand character. In comparison with Christianity it has not even the merit of priority which seems to belong to it. For Christianity is this original, this heavenly religion, which has cast its shadow into this world in the form of Judaism.

the sanctuary: marg. 'holy things.' It seems unwarranted to explain this as the Holy of Holies as distinct from the Holy Place. The veil is removed and the two are thus thrown into one. There is no distinction between it and the 'true tabernacle.'

which the Lord pitched. Perhaps borrowed from Num. xxiv. 6, where the LXX translates 'tabernacles which the Lord pitched.'

3. The connexion is difficult. The thought expressed is simple: a high-priest implies a sacrifice, therefore our high-priest must have a sacrifice to offer. And it is introduced in this indefinite way, 'something to offer,' in order to stimulate the readers to think more of what this offering was. The difficulty is the introduction of the necessity of an offering in an argument to prove that the ministry is exercised in a better sanctuary. Perhaps

wherefore it is necessary that this *high priest* also have
4 somewhat to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would
not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer
5 the gifts according to the law; who serve *that which is*

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it is merely a remark by the way to justify the term 'minister.' He has a service to perform, the high-priestly service of offering, and in that case verse 4 explains why this ministry is exercised in the heavenly sanctuary. The former part of the verse is parallel to v. 1.

somewhat to offer. The Greek implies a single completed offering (cf. ix. 25).

4. There is no room on earth for Jesus to exercise his priesthood, for there is already a priesthood established by the law. Therefore since he is a high-priest (verse 1) and has an offering to present (verse 3), he must minister in the heavenly sanctuary. This verse gives a proof of verse 2. It is assumed that the only valid priesthood on earth is the Levitical. But this does not mean that while we remain on earth we should cling fast to it. For we belong to the world to come and have already come to the new Jerusalem, in which city of the living God is the heavenly sanctuary, where Jesus ministers as our high-priest. This verse is often thought to exclude the death of Christ from his high-priestly work, since it took place on earth, where he could not be high-priest. But the edge of this argument is turned by the consideration that what happens on earth does not necessarily belong to the earthly order. The case is analogous to that of Christians just mentioned. They live on earth but belong to heaven. So the death of Christ may be a priestly act, even though we admit that if he were on earth he could not be a priest at all (see pp. 136–138).

he would not be a priest at all. Many think the writer's point is, he would not be a priest, not to say a high-priest. It is very questionable if the distinction was in his mind. The order in the Greek would probably have been slightly different. The thought is quite general, there would have been no priestly office for him to fill.

seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law. It is frequently inferred from this that the temple services were still being carried on, and therefore that the Epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. But this inference cannot be sustained. For in the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians we read: 'Not in every place, brethren, are the continual daily sacrifices offered, or the freewill offerings, or the sin offerings and the trespass offerings, but in Jerusalem alone. And even there the offering is not made in every place, but before

a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned *of God* when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount. But 6

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the sanctuary in the court of the altar; and this too through the high-priest and the aforesaid ministers, after that the victim to be offered hath been inspected for blemishes' (chap. xli, quoted from Lightfoot's translation). This, which is much more explicit than anything in this Epistle, was written a quarter of a century after Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed and the sacrificial system had come to an end. The writer uses the present tense in this verse and elsewhere, because he is dealing with the Levitical system as it is laid down in the law, and thus he speaks of the tabernacle rather than the temple.

5. a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. See the note on verse 2 of this chapter. These priests are servants of the copy not the original, for the law itself describes the tabernacle as made after the heavenly pattern. The inference is therefore that if the priesthood of Jesus is not on earth it must be in heaven, and thus his ministry is exercised in the celestial original of the sanctuary in which the Levitical priests minister. 'Shadow' may express two ideas, the shadow as opposed to the substance (Col. ii. 17), and the blurred, unsteady resemblance as opposed to the clear-cut image (x. 1). 'Copy and shadow' imply original and substance to give rise to them, and these are to be found in 'the heavenly things.' To the author the material and tangible are the unreal, it is the celestial archetypes that possess true reality; cf. 2 Cor. iv. 18. Col. ii. 17 contains one of the most interesting points of contact with this Epistle to be found in Paul.

make: marg. 'complete.'

See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount. The quotation is from Exod. xxv. 40 (cf. xxv. 9, xxvi. 30, xxvii. 8; Num. viii. 4; Acts vii. 44) with the addition of 'all things,' found also in Philo. It is needless to suppose that 'the pattern' seen by Moses was itself a copy of the heavenly sanctuary. Nor is it at all clear that modern writers warn us rightly against a prosaic pressing of the passage to include minute details in the furniture of the tabernacle. The priestly writer certainly applied his principle with prosaic literalness, as may be seen from Exod. xxv, where 'all the furniture' is to be made after the pattern, and even tongs and snuff-dishes are included. Probably the author of the Epistle did regard these things as having their heavenly archetypes, taking quite seriously what Scripture actually said, since he was

now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant,
7 which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then would no place

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unacquainted with our modern canons of fitness, by which it is somewhat unsafe to guide our exegesis.

6. The greater excellence of his ministry is proportionate to the superiority of the New Covenant. The argument is reversed in vii. 20-22. There, too, he is spoken of as 'surety,' here as 'mediator' of the 'covenant' (marg. 'testament,' so in 8-10; see note on ix. 16, 17).

now: in the state of things described.

which hath been enacted upon better promises. The 'promises' are those which follow in the quotation from Jeremiah. They are better than those on which the Old Covenant was instituted, inasmuch as they promised complete forgiveness of sin, full and universal knowledge of God, and the writing on the heart of an inward law.

7. Had the first covenant been perfect, it would not have been superseded by a second. The writer does not shrink from declaring that the first covenant was not free from blame, and we must allow him to mean what he says. It is interesting as bearing on the view that Luke meant to write a third book—since in Acts i. 1 he refers to the gospel as 'the first' rather than the former treatise—that here the author speaks of 'first' rather than former, although the second was the final covenant. The reading 'another' for 'second,' though found in our best MS. (B) and accepted by Weiss, should probably be rejected.

8-12. The promise here quoted is from Jer. xxxi. 31-34. The variations with one exception are unimportant. It is significant that the writer should lay such emphasis on Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant. This is one of the greatest passages in the O. T., inasmuch as it makes the decisive advance from the conception of religion as a national or social matter to that of religion as a matter of the heart and personal relation to God. In giving such prominence to it the Epistle agrees with Christ's reference to the cup as the New Covenant in his blood, and Paul's description of the gospel as the New Covenant. Yet it is noteworthy that the author leaves some of Jeremiah's most striking phrases undeveloped in his argument. It is to be noticed how explicitly Jeremiah contrasts the New Covenant with that made with Israel at the Exodus, so that the author is fully justified in pressing this prophecy to prove that in the O. T. itself an abolition of the Old Covenant was predicted. Of course, as the most spiritual of the prophets, Jeremiah holds in this respect

have been sought for a second. For finding fault with 8
them, he saith,

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,
That I will make a new covenant with the house of
Israel and with the house of Judah;
Not according to the covenant that I made with 9
their fathers
In the day that I took them by the hand to lead
them forth out of the land of Egypt;
For they continued not in my covenant,
And I regarded them not, saith the Lord.
For this is the covenant that I will make with the 10
house of Israel

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an exceptional position in the O. T. The prophecy was originally spoken after the destruction of Jerusalem (B. C. 586), or in contemplation of it. Some critics have denied that Jeremiah was its author, but on inadequate grounds.

8. finding fault with them, he saith. It is possible to translate 'finding fault he saith to them,' though this is perhaps less likely.

I will make: literally, as in the margin, 'I will accomplish,' a slight deviation from the LXX, to indicate that God will bring His work to completion. In verse 10 'I will make' is literally as in the margin 'I will covenant.'

new: that is in character. A different word occurs in xii. 24, where the meaning is new in time.

with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Earlier in the chapter Jeremiah has foretold the return of Israel as well as Judah, and the reunion of the divided nation.

9. And I regarded them not. Our present Hebrew text reads 'although I was an husband unto them,' though some think that the verb, which in Hebrew means 'to marry,' may bear in this passage a sense it has in Arabic, 'to be disgusted.' It is simpler however to suppose that the LXX translator read a slightly different word in the Hebrew text meaning 'to abhor' or 'reject,' and this may have been the original reading in Hebrew.

10. Instead of an external law engraven on tables of stone, there will be the law written on tables that are hearts of flesh. An external code must always be rigid and inelastic; frequently it affords no guidance to conduct, and its control acts as an irritant to the natural man. The law written on the heart implies an

After those days, saith the Lord;
I will put my laws into their mind,
And on their heart also will I write them:
And I will be to them a God,
And they shall be to me a people:
11 And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen,
And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:

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inner principle which can deal with each case of conscience sympathetically as it arises, and can ensure the fulfilment of its behests, because it has brought the inner life into perfect harmony with itself. The heart, and thus the whole life, has, with the engraving of the law upon it, itself become new. The heart embraces not only the emotional and ethical but also the intellectual life. And thus, by being transformed from a foreign ruler into a native and inward impulse, the law gains the power of self-fulfilment.

And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. This relationship was contemplated by the Sinaitic covenant (cf. Exod. vi. 7; 2 Sam. vii. 24), but never truly realized because of the lack of correspondence in character between the holy God and sinful Israel. The prophets from Amos onwards are preoccupied with this problem, solving it by predictions of the extinction, or captivity and conversion, or the sifting of Israel. Jeremiah solves it by this promise of a New Covenant to be made with the reunited house of Israel; for it is still a covenant made with the nation, not with individuals. But the advance he makes is that Israel's side of the covenant is perfectly fulfilled, because religion has become a matter for the individual. While it was regarded exclusively as national, it was impossible for it to be other than superficial and external. By carrying it into the heart it became personal, and because each individual was righteous, the aggregate of individuals that formed the nation must be righteous too. Thus we may say that individualism guaranteed the reality of national religion. But by this transformation in the idea of religion the national limitations were really transcended, and since the moral and spiritual are the universal, with Jeremiah's doctrine of the New Covenant universalism was born. The State could perish, and sacrifice be brought to an end, but religion had been detached from these accidents, and could therefore survive them. And thus the people of the New Covenant, the Israel of God, is gathered out of 'every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.'

11. Since God has written His law on the heart of each,

For all shall know me,
From the least to the greatest of them.
For I will be merciful to their iniquities, 12
And their sins will I remember no more.
In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first 13
old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged
is nigh unto vanishing away.

Now even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine 9

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there is no need for any man to make Him known to his fellow. For all without exception shall receive an intuitive knowledge of Him. Cf. 'and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord' (Isa. liv. 13).

12. It was through sin that the Old Covenant failed. For it provided, as the author shews later, no effectual means of removing it. Hence under it man never attained real righteousness or the knowledge of God. The New Covenant secures the forgiveness of iniquities, and God will treat them as though they had not been. Thus the hindrance to fellowship with Him, and conduct in harmony with His will, is taken away, and the strangely striking phrase of the poet is fulfilled, 'Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back' (Isa. xxxviii. 17).

13. This prediction shews that already in Jeremiah's time the Old Covenant was suffering from senile decay, and must in the course of nature sooner or later be superseded. It is a mistake to infer from this verse that the destruction of Jerusalem was imminent, but had not yet taken place. For the author does not speak of the Old Covenant as 'nigh unto vanishing away' in his own time, but in the time of Jeremiah. The old vanishes away not with the destruction of Jerusalem, but with the establishment of the New Covenant.

ix. 1–10. *The tabernacle and its ineffective services.* The first covenant had a tabernacle, furnished with golden splendour, but its holiest place was open to none save the high-priest, and to him only once in the year. This symbolizes that while the dividing veil is unremoved, the services of the sanctuary cannot cleanse the conscience or give real access to God.

The author now proceeds to contrast in fuller detail the ministry of the Old Covenant with that of the New, beginning with the arrangements of the tabernacle, and shewing that they symbolized the impossibility of communion with God. He then passes on to shew that this communion has been made possible and a New

2 service, and its sanctuary, *a sanctuary* of this world. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein *were* the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which

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Covenant inaugurated through the blood of Christ offered by himself once for all.

1. ordinances: Divinely ordained regulations.

its sanctuary, a sanctuary **of this world.** It thus stands contrasted with the 'tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say not of this creation.' As a sanctuary of this world, it is a copy of that of the world to come, and therefore inferior and transitory.

2. there was a tabernacle prepared. The writer speaks of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies as two distinct tents. The 'tabernacle' is not, apparently, the whole tabernacle, but the Holy Place, 'the first' tabernacle.

the candlestick: Exod. xxv. 31–40. It was a golden lamp-stand holding seven lamps. In Solomon's temple there are said to have been ten (1 Kings vii. 49), but Stade, followed by several critics, regards the passage as an untrustworthy interpolation. In the second temple there was one (1 Macc. i. 21), which was taken away by Antiochus Epiphanes, and a new one was put in its place by Judas Maccabæus (1 Macc. iv. 49). This was taken by Titus, and it, or more probably a copy of it, was borne in the triumph. The famous reproduction on the Arch of Titus may not represent the original with perfect fidelity. Josephus in an obscure passage (*Wars of the Jews*, vii. 55) speaks of that carried in the procession as changed in construction. (See article 'Candlestick,' Smith, *Dict. of the Bible*, 2nd ed., and in Cheyne and Black, *Encyc. Biblica.*)

the table: Exod. xxv. 23–30. It was made of acacia-wood plated with gold. It was used for the shewbread.

the shewbread: Exod. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5–9. Originally the shewbread was bread laid out as a meal for the Deity (cf. the phrase 'bread of God,' Lev. xxi. 6, &c.). It was eaten by the priests as His representatives. In early Israel it was probably not necessarily reserved to them. Although 1 Sam. xxi. 4–6 is obscure, and perhaps textually corrupt, the general meaning, that David and his companions could take it away and eat it, provided their persons and vessels were ceremonially clean, seems clear. They would be entitled to it as guests of the Deity. The Hebrew term means 'bread of the face,' or 'presence-bread.' The phrase here is literally translated in the margin, 'the setting forth of the loaves,' and possibly we should explain it as referring to the rite, 'wherein . . . the setting forth of the bread' takes place.

which is called the Holy place: Exod. xxvi. 33. This is the

is called the Holy place. And after the second veil, the 3
tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies; having 4

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less sacred part of the tabernacle, in contrast to the Holy of Holies, from which it was separated by the veil, called in the next verse 'the second veil.'

3. the second veil: Exod. xxvi. 31–33. It is so called here because a veil hung over the entrance to the Holy Place, but usually it was called 'the veil' simply.

the Holy of holies. This was the innermost sanctuary, cubical in shape and quite dark. It was half the size of the Holy Place. The name is a literal translation of the Hebrew term, which is really a superlative, meaning Most Holy Place.

4. having a golden censer. The Greek word may be so translated, or 'altar of incense' as in the margin. The former is favoured by the usage of the LXX, the latter by Philo and Josephus. But it is not probable that the writer means 'golden censer.' Such a thing was quite unknown to the law. We have mention of censers in our English version, but the Hebrew word means 'fire-pan,' and the LXX translates by a different word from that used here, giving the sense 'brazier' (Lev. xvi. 12, &c.). Apart from this the censer was of no importance, and even the golden censer used in the later ritual on the Day of Atonement seems to have been kept in the storeroom, and to have belonged neither to the Holy Place nor to the Holy of Holies. Thus the difficulty which is urged against the interpretation 'altar of incense,' that this did not stand in the Holy of Holies, applies against the translation 'censer' with equal force. Nor indeed could it remain in the Holy of Holies, for the high-priest had to take in the brazier or censer with fire from the altar, that he might cast incense on it and thus veil in the cloud of smoke the presence of God at the mercy-seat. To have entered without incense would have been to incur peril of death. What decides in favour of 'altar of incense' is its very great importance, which makes it most improbable that it can have been omitted here. It is called 'golden' because it was plated with gold, though made of acacia-wood. Since, however, this did not belong to the Holy of Holies but to the Holy Place, it is thought by several that the author has made a mistake. It was well known, however, that the altar of incense was in the Holy Place, and the author can hardly have been ignorant of this. It is probable that he did not mean to assert the contrary. Instead of saying 'in which were a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant,' he varies the form from that used in verse 2, and speaks of the tabernacle as 'having a golden altar of incense.' In other words, the altar of incense was closely connected with the Holy of Holies. Thus in 1 Kings

a golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid

vi. 22 we read of the 'altar that belonged to the oracle,' though the text here is suspicious and the LXX has no mention of the altar (a point overlooked by those who speak of the author as following this passage). On the Day of Atonement it might seem, according to its idea, to belong to the Holy of Holies, and the ritual of that day, in which the two chambers tended to become one, may have influenced the expression here. The difficulty probably arises from the fact, on which recent critics are largely agreed, that the altar of incense belongs to a later stratum of the Priestly Code. It occurs in Exod. xxx, though its proper place would have been in Exod. xxv, with the ark, the table, and the lamp-stand. The two latter alone are there mentioned as belonging to the Holy Place. It is most remarkable as confirming this that nothing is said of its use in Lev. xvi, where the ritual for the Day of Atonement is given, though even this chapter contains secondary elements, and though in Exod. xxx. 10 its horns are to be smeared once in the year with the blood of the atonement offering. Its absence in other places where it should surely have been mentioned is further evidence for this view. The LXX omits Exod. xxxvii. 25–29, which narrates the making of it. It is also to be noticed that the language of Exod. xxx. 6 is ambiguous as to its position: 'Thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.' There was to be a daily offering of incense on it by the high-priest, morning and evening. It is interesting that in The Apocalypse of Baruch, vi. 7 we read: 'And I saw Him descend into the Holy of Holies, and take from thence the veil, and the holy ephod, and the mercy-seat, and the two tables, and the holy raiment of the priests, and the altar of incense, and the forty-eight precious stones, wherewith the priest was adorned, and all the holy vessels of the tabernacle.' (On the history of the altar of incense Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, pp. 65–67, may be consulted.)

the ark of the covenant. See Exod. xxv. 10–22. It is there described as a box made of acacia-wood and plated within and without with gold. After several changes of fortune it was placed in the Holy of Holies of Solomon's temple. Its later history is obscure. It may, as Smend suggests, have perished through age, without any one venturing to restore it. (But see Cheyne in the article referred to below.) Jer. iii. 16 may imply that it had disappeared. There seems to be no solid reason for regarding this passage as an interpolation. It is noteworthy that it is not mentioned among the temple spoils taken by the Babylonians, nor those returned by Cyrus. The tradition that Jeremiah hid

round about with gold, wherein *was* a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and above it cherubim of glory over- 5

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the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense (2 Macc. ii. 4-8) is clearly a legend invented to account for their disappearance. When Pompey entered the Holy of Holies (B. C. 63) he found nothing at all. In Rev. xi. 19 the ark is seen in the heavenly temple. Spitta omits the words 'that is in heaven,' but Bousset, the latest commentator, retains them. It is called 'ark of the covenant' because it contained 'the tables of the covenant.' (A radical, but very instructive, treatment of the history of the ark is given by Cheyne in his article, 'Ark of the Covenant,' in the *Encyc. Biblica*.)

a golden pot holding the manna: Exod. xvi. 32–35. The 'pot' is not called 'golden' in the Hebrew text, the epithet is added in the LXX. The Pentateuch narrative suggests that the pot and Aaron's rod were placed not in the ark but before it ('before the Lord,' 'before the Testimony'); and 1 Kings viii. 9 expressly states that 'there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb.' The author of the Epistle may have inferred from the Pentateuch that the pot and rod were placed in the ark, and as he dealt only with the tabernacle, the temple arrangements would not concern him. Wetstein points out that some Rabbis drew the same inference from the language of the Pentateuch. 'The hidden manna' of Rev. ii. 17 may rest on the same view.

Aaron's rod that budded: Num. xvii. 1–10, the proof that the priesthood belonged to the tribe of Levi.

the tables of the covenant: that is, the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed. Their presence in the ark is referred to in Exod. xxv. 16, 21, xl. 20; Deut. x. 2–5; 1 Kings viii. 9. On the difficult critical and historical questions that arise as to the stones in the ark and the Ten Commandments see articles, 'Ark of the Covenant' and 'Decalogue' in the *Encyc. Biblica*.

5. and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat (marg. 'the propitiatory'): Exod. xxv. 17–22, xxxvii. 6–9. The 'mercy-seat' was the lid of the ark. It was made of pure gold. The Hebrew term *Kapporeth* probably means 'covering,' the translation 'mercy-seat' implying a wrong derivation. In Biblical Hebrew the word from which it is derived has a moral significance only, but probably in an earlier stage of the language it meant also 'to cover' in the general sense of the term. (See Driver and White, 'Leviticus' in the *Polychrome Bible*, pp. 80, 81.) The Greek word used for it in the LXX and this passage means

shadowing the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot
6 now speak severally. Now these things having been
thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first
7 tabernacle, accomplishing the services; but into the

'propitiatory.' This is an abbreviation of the translation 'propitiatory cover.' The strict translation of the Hebrew word was 'cover' (*epithema*), but the translators added the defining adjective 'propitiatory,' and subsequently used this by itself to represent the lid of the ark. (See Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, pp. 124–135.) The blood was sprinkled on it on the Day of Atonement. The 'cherubim' were two golden figures placed at each end of the ark 'overshadowing the mercy-seat,' to which they were joined, with their outspread wings. Between the two cherubim God was enthroned, and thence He declared His will. The figures were probably of composite character, perhaps compounded of lion and eagle. Like the griffins, with whom etymology and character closely connect them, they are guardians of sacred places. So they guard the way to the tree of life (Gen. iii. 24), and probably they are guardians of the ark. But they are also throne-bearers of God—His Divine chariot. In this they have points of connexion with the thunder-cloud, as the serpent-like seraphim have with the forked lightning. Thus God is said to ride on a cherub, just as He is said to ride on a swift cloud. So we may account for the flaming sword of Genesis and the flashing fire in Ezekiel's description, which represents a highly developed conception with large individual elements. Similarly God sits enthroned upon the cherubim, and 'cherubim of glory' probably means that they bear the Divine glory. The 'glory' is the Shekinah of later Jewish theology (cf. Rom. ix. 4).

of which things we cannot now speak severally. He cannot enlarge on the typical significance of these details, since he must bring out the meaning of the division of the sanctuary into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies and the inaccessibility of the latter.

6. these things having been thus prepared. It is noteworthy how effective is the contrast between the golden splendours and the spiritual poverty of the tabernacle.

the priests go in continually. Clearly the writer is not thinking of what takes place in his own time, for the furniture of the Holy of Holies had ceased to exist. He is referring to the ritual of the tabernacle, as it stands written in the law (see note on viii. 4). We cannot therefore infer that the temple was not yet destroyed.

the first tabernacle: the Holy Place.

7. The inferiority of Judaism as a religion is shewn by the fact

second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the 8 way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing; which *is* 9

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that its priests can enter the Holy Place only, and therefore never come into immediate contact with God. This is reserved for the high-priest, and he can enter on one day only in the year, and then not without blood, which he must offer both for himself and the people.

once in the year: probably taken from Exod. xxx. 10. The high-priest entered the Holy of Holies three or four times on the Day of Atonement, but the writer means that he entered on this occasion only in the whole year.

not without blood. He offered a bullock as a sin-offering for himself, and took the blood within the veil to sprinkle it on the mercy-seat. Then he did the same with the blood of the goat offered for the sins of the people. These are spoken of as 'ignorances' (marg.), because wilful sins were not to be atoned for.

8. At first sight this verse seems to mean that by this exclusion of all but the high-priest from the Holy of Holies, and the rigid restrictions on his entrance, the Holy Spirit, the author of the law, indicated that while the Holy Place stood, access was barred to the Holy of Holies. This can hardly be the meaning. For the fact and what it indicates are thus practically identified. Besides, it involves taking 'the holy place' to mean the Holy of Holies, with which in verses 2, 3 it is expressly contrasted. If we say, while the priests can enter into the Holy Place, this is closed to the people, we escape one difficulty to fall into another, which is that this is not symbolized by the arrangement of the sanctuary. Nor is the contrast between people and priests prominent. We should probably therefore with most commentators explain 'the Holy Place' to be the heavenly sanctuary (so in verse 12). Since in it there was no distinction between different parts of the sanctuary, the veil being removed, it might be called indifferently the Holy or the Most Holy Place. The words 'while the first tabernacle is yet standing' scarcely bring out the full force of the Greek. The meaning is that while the Holy Place holds the position assigned to it, the Spirit teaches us that real access to God is not secured.

9. which is a parable for the time now present. It is not clear whether 'which' refers to 'the first tabernacle,' or to 'standing,' or generally to the preceding context. Usually it is connected with 'the first tabernacle,' and practically the connexion with 'standing' comes to much the same. The fact that there was

a parable for the time *now* present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touch-
10 ing the conscience, make the worshipper perfect, *being* only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.

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such a thing as a first sanctuary, implying a second, was significant. The first indicates an imperfect stage not yet overcome. The lesson drawn is that the sacrifices and other ritual observances 'cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect.' He means that the Jewish ritual cannot release the conscience from the sense of guilt, and therefore cannot secure for the worshipper free communion with God. Were it otherwise the way into the Holy of Holies would be thrown open. But God was hedged about with such awful sanctities that the non-priestly worshippers could not enter even into the Holy Place, and the high-priest alone, and he only with due precautions and on one day of the year could enter the Holy of Holies. This shewed that Judaism had not solved the fundamental problem of religion: How may man gain fellowship with God? It recognized the problem, since its ritual dealt with the sense of guilt, which was the great barrier to communion. But its efforts were futile, for the whole ritual was a series of 'carnal ordinances' (cf. x. 4), and therefore could not secure a spiritual result. It could obviously, then, be nothing more than a temporary expedient, a makeshift imposed till a 'season of reformation.' By 'the time now present' the author seems to mean 'this age' in the technical sense it bore in Jewish theology; it is contrasted with 'time of reformation' in verse 10. 'For' probably means 'in reference to.'

according to which cannot refer to 'time,' but may refer either to 'tabernacle' or to 'parable,' probably the latter, 'conformably to this parable,' tainted with the same defect.

10. The construction in the original is difficult, and the meaning is uncertain. The R. V. translation is quite clear. But we might also translate 'being merely carnal ordinances resting upon meats and drinks and divers washings till a time of reformation.' Rendall translates 'that cannot consecrate him that serveth as touching the conscience, but only in regard of meats and drinks and divers washings.' These and other interpretations cannot be discussed here. It seems unnecessary to abandon the R. V. translation.

meats and drinks and divers washings: cf. Col. ii. 16; 1 Cor. x. 2–4. The reference in 'meats' is very general, including laws on clean and unclean food, sacrificial meals and the passover. No law is given as to lawful or unlawful 'drinks,' except with

But Christ having come a high priest of the good 11
things to come, through the greater and more perfect

reference to special cases such as the priest's abstinence from wine when about to minister, Lev. x. 8, 9. and the Nazirite's vow, Num. vi. 2, 3. The 'washings' of the law are numerous (on the consecration of the priest, on the Day of Atonement, after pollution of any kind, and so forth).

a time of reformation: the period of the New Covenant, inaugurated by the offering of Christ.

ix. 11-22. *The blood of Christ.* Christ through his own blood has entered once for all into the heavenly sanctuary, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of animals confers ritual cleanness, how much more shall the blood of Christ, instinct with imperishable spirit, cleanse the conscience! As mediator of a New Covenant he clears by his death the sins that had accumulated under the Old, so that the called may receive the eternal inheritance. For a will cannot come into force without the testator's death. The first covenant was therefore dedicated with blood, and in the law all things are cleansed with blood, and without it is no remission.

11, 12. These verses put together several of the leading elements in Christ's high-priestly work. The scene of it was the immaterial tabernacle, not like the Mosaic made with hands and belonging to this lower creation. He entered, not through the blood of animal victims, but through his own. Nor, like the high-priest's visit to the Holy of Holies, was his stay in the sanctuary brief, hurried, and every year repeated, but he entered once for all. For what he obtained was (real) redemption for eternity, and not (unreal) redemption for a year.

11. of the good things to come. The marginal reading, 'the good things that are come,' is supported by two MSS. (B and D), which when united form a very strong combination. It is also the more difficult reading and therefore the more likely to be original, since the tendency of scribes was to substitute an easy for a difficult reading. Further, the alteration was the more likely, because in x. 1 we read 'the good *things* to come,' and this was probably assimilated to it. On the other hand, a very similar form of the word occurs immediately before, so that it might be due to mistaken repetition, though this is less likely. The author speaks, then, from the standpoint not of this age but of the age to come, already realized. The reading in the text implies the standpoint of this age, to which 'the good things' are still future.

through the greater and more perfect tabernacle. This is a difficult phrase. It is most natural to think of 'the greater

tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of

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and more perfect tabernacle' as the heavenly counterpart of the first tabernacle, through which Christ passed into the heavenly Holy of Holies, here called 'the holy place.' The expression would thus correspond to 'having passed through the heavens,' 'made higher than the heavens.' But it is not of the material heavens, in any case, that the author is thinking, but of 'the true tabernacle which God pitched, not man.' The difficulty is that this interpretation involves a division of the heavenly sanctuary into two parts, whereas the Epistle seems to teach that the veil of division has been done away with. But this is not conclusive. The writer who thought of the earthly tabernacle as made after the celestial archetype must have thought of the veil on earth as copied from the pattern shewn in the mount. Nor was this veil removed till Christ entered the heavenly Holy of Holies, cleansing the heavenly things from this imperfection. He might then be fitly spoken of as passing through the outer tabernacle into the inmost shrine, for it was only when he had done so that the separation was abolished. The Fathers usually explained the tabernacle as the flesh or human nature of Christ. This is supported by the use of the same preposition 'through' with 'tabernacle' as with 'blood,' and gives to it in each case the sense 'by means of.' It has, besides, an analogy in the words in x. 20, 'through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.' It yields further the beautiful thought that Christ's life on earth was the condition and means through which he reached his high-priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary. We may also compare the passages in which his body is spoken of as a tabernacle. This view, however, has found little favour among recent commentators, though Weiss is mistaken in the assertion that it is universally given up (Moulton accepts it, Westcott includes it in a larger view, Bruce prefers it if we have anything beyond 'a form of thought dictated by the parallelism between Christ and Aaron'). The objections are serious. There is the description of it as **not of this creation**. Even if we translate 'not of common structure,' the inapplicability to Christ's body or humanity does not seem to be removed, especially in a writing which, as no other, insists on the identity of his humanity with ours. Even more serious is the difficulty that the thought is suggested by nothing in the passage. The immediate impression is that a heavenly counterpart to the earthly tabernacle is intended. That Christ should be tabernacle as well as priest and victim was surely not in the author's mind. Westcott, after pointing out that on earth Christ fulfilled the ideal of a tabernacle in representing the Presence of God and offering access to Him, says that we must take account of his heavenly ministry also. He therefore adds the thought of the glorified Church

this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and 12
calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for
all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.
For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of 13

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which is his Body and in which he ministers. But the coming through the tabernacle is associated with the *entrance* into the heavenly sanctuary, as something which precedes or accompanies it. Others, who refer the 'tabernacle' to the heavenly sanctuary, think that there is no reference to the division by the veil, and take 'through' to signify 'by means of,' in the sense that Christ accomplishes his work by means of a better sanctuary. But although 'through' bears this meaning in the next verse, both 'having come' and 'entered in' favour the local interpretation. This heavenly tabernacle as the archetype of the earthly is naturally 'greater and more perfect.'

not made with hands: cf. 'the house not made with hands' contrasted with 'the earthly house of this tabernacle' (the body), and the evidence of the false witnesses in Mark xiv. 58.

not of this creation. It does not belong to 'the heaven and the earth,' the creation of which is mentioned in Gen. i. 1. It is immaterial and spiritual. Field thinks the word translated 'this' is used here in the sense 'common,' 'ordinary,' so the phrase would mean 'not of ordinary construction.'

12. through the blood of goats and calves. The former was offered by the high-priest on the Day of Atonement for sins of the people, the latter for his own. It was in virtue of the blood that he was able to enter in at all, and by application of the blood to the mercy-seat he gained such redemption as was possible.

through his own blood: since he was the victim in the sacrifice which corresponded to the rite of the Day of Atonement. On the question whether we are in any sense to conceive Christ as taking in his blood into the heavenly Holy Place see note on verse 25. The significance of the contrast is drawn out in verses 13, 14.

once for all: in contrast to the high-priest's entrance 'once in the year' (verse 7).

having obtained eternal redemption. 'Obtained' means literally 'found for himself,' and implies personal effort. It is questionable whether it indicates a fact preceding or accompanying the entrance. It is probably the latter, for redemption is not complete till the heavenly sanctuary is entered. The clause justifies 'once for all.' Repetition was unnecessary since the redemption was for ever complete. 'Redemption' means simply 'deliverance,' the thought of ransom price having disappeared.

13, 14. These verses support the description of the effects of

Christ's offering by an argument from its incomparable worth. There is a double argument. If the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer cleanse, how much more the blood of Christ? and if the animal sacrifices of the law cleanse the flesh, how much more shall Christ's blood cleanse the conscience? The reasoning rests partly on the relative worth of the victims, an animal against a human offering, nay against the offering of Christ himself, but also on the moral element that entered into the death of Christ. That animal sacrifices have a real cleansing power is admitted by the author, since it followed from the institution of them in the law. But this was limited by their radical defects. The victim is irrational, unconscious of the end for which its blood is shed. Nor does it freely choose its death, it goes to the sacrifice an involuntary victim. No moral quality is present in its death, the act never rises for it above the plane of the physical, what moral element is in it is imparted by the offerer. The virtue of the physical offering is limited to physical results; a ritual cleanness, but no more it is able to effect. But the blood of Christ is freely shed, he is a conscious victim, deliberately choosing his death and choosing it in love. And since he thus 'offered himself,' his act is charged with moral significance. His blood is instinct, not with physical vitality, but with an eternal spirit. And thus its virtue is not for mere ceremonial cleansing but for moral and spiritual. It was the offering of one without moral blemish. In an animal victim only physical faultlessness could be required, and only physical faults could really be touched by its sacrifice. But Christ's spotless purity gave his blood the power to effect the hardest of all moral tasks, taxing God's own resources to the uttermost, to cleanse the conscience from guilt, which is the hardest because the sinful act once accomplished can never be undone. The inmost reason is not explained; for the writer the cleansing efficacy of blood was a principle once for all laid down in the O. T., and as a matter of Divine appointment needed no further explanation.

13. the blood of goats and bulls: see note on verse 12. 'Bulls' is substituted for 'calves' (verse 12), because the masculine expressed the contrast to the 'heifer' better than the common noun.

the ashes of a heifer. The reference is to one of the most striking rites of purification in the law. A red heifer, without blemish and unbroken to the yoke, was slain without the camp and its blood sprinkled seven times towards the sanctuary. The carcase, including the blood, was then completely burnt along with cedar-wood, hyssop, and scarlet. Its ashes were kept in a ritually clean place outside the camp, and they were mixed with 'living' water to form a 'water of separation,' which was sprinkled to purify from contact with a dead body (Num. xix). The ceremony

a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify
unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall 14
the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered

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has several points of archaeological interest, which cannot be referred to here.

sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: restore ceremonial purity, so as to fit a man for such service in the sanctuary as might be open to him. 'Sanctify' has, of course, no moral significance here. It is limited to ritual purity of the body (cf. Exod. xix. 10), and could in the nature of things be nothing more.

14. the blood of Christ. Perhaps we should translate 'blood of the Messiah.' The article is prefixed to 'Christ' and the title is probably official, not merely personal.

through the eternal Spirit. This is a very difficult phrase. The article is absent in the Greek, and literally the words mean 'through eternal spirit.' The English translation very strongly suggests that the Holy Spirit is meant. But this is very improbable, for the article would have been used, and it is not easy to understand why the author did not say Holy Spirit if he had meant this (as in verse 8, iii. 7, x. 15). It is Christ's own spirit that is referred to. Generally the phrase is connected with 'after the power of an indissoluble life' (vii. 16), and it is explained that, in virtue of this, death was not the end of action for him, but he lived on, in spite of it, to offer in heaven. It seems difficult to believe that nothing more than this is meant. It would have been simpler to say 'life' instead of 'spirit' to express this thought, using of course some other adjective than 'eternal.' That 'flesh' and 'spirit' occur in the contrasted statements of verse 13 and verse 14 suggests that they are meant to be contrasted. It is true that the contrast is not formally exact, for 'flesh' corresponds to 'conscience,' each representing the sphere in which the cleansing is experienced. But there is a real contrast. The 'flesh' is cleansed because the nature of the sacrifice is fleshly. The 'blood of the Messiah' can cleanse the conscience because there works within it the virtue of an 'eternal spirit.' The O. T. sacrifices have their being and all their issues in the realm of the physical. The sacrifice of Christ transcends them in this also that its character is spiritual, and therefore it effects an inner cleansing. And 'spirit' is not like 'flesh,' the weak and transient; it is the imperishable, untouched by time, unweakened by decay. And thus the offering of Christ is lifted into the region of eternity, and that in all its extent, whether part of it was accomplished on earth and in time or not. For it is not its local environment but its animating spirit that constitutes it an heavenly offering. But spirit is also the ethically free, and thus his sacrifice is stamped with a voluntary as well as

himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience
15 from dead works to serve the living God? And for this
cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death

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a rational character. That 'without blemish' expresses an ethical element is true; but this does not exclude the ethical element from 'eternal spirit,' for the former asserts the moral quality of the victim, while the latter asserts the moral quality of the high-priestly act.

offered himself. The reference is probably to the cross, not to the offering in the heavenly sanctuary (cf. x. 10). This also tells against the usual interpretation of 'eternal spirit,' for if the meaning of this is that he lives on, in spite of death, to minister in heaven, the offering referred to must be in heaven. It is noteworthy how great an emphasis the author throws on the fact that Christ offered himself. The order in the Greek makes 'himself' very emphatic.

without blemish. An indispensable moral quality for a spiritual sacrifice, as it was a physical quality for an animal sacrifice.

cleanse your conscience from dead works. The ashes of the heifer cleansed from the ceremonial defilement caused by contact with the dead: the blood of Christ cleanses the conscience from the defilement of dead works. The conscience is cleansed by the removal of the sense of guilt, which prevents approach to God, and this is effected through the forgiveness promised in the prophecy of the New Covenant. On 'dead works' see the note on vi. 1. Probably the marginal reading 'our' should be adopted. Unhappily our best MS. (B) fails us here. It comes to an end in this verse.

to serve the living God. See note on iii. 12. Cleansing fits for service.

15. Since such power resides in his work he has become 'the mediator of a new covenant' (marg. 'testament'; see note on the next verse), so that those who are called may receive their inheritance. But his death was necessary because under the first covenant transgressions had accumulated, and these had to be removed through death, that so without encumbrance the inheritance might be received and enjoyed. The passage is difficult. The main sentence consists of the first and third clauses, the second clause expressing a condition to which the main proposition is subject. It might be thought that those who inherit under the New Covenant are affected in no way by the transgressions which have taken place under the Old. But the author does not think of the New Covenant as making a completely fresh start. The inheritance, which is the rest of God, was contemplated by the

having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must of necessity be 16

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first covenant, but sin barred the way to it. When Christ comes the accumulated debt must be swept away, that the promise of inheritance may be satisfactorily fulfilled. These sins are cancelled by the death of Christ, for the elaborate sacrificial apparatus of Judaism effected nothing at all beyond ceremonial purification, as the author says with the utmost directness in x. 4. And these sins must be dealt with, otherwise the conscience would not be cleansed: for conscience is not cleansed by drugging it into forgetfulness of its guilt. The sins themselves must be dealt with, and not merely the sinner's consciousness of them. Thus the death of Christ must have a retrospective action, grappling with sins already committed, as well as imparting power for righteousness in the future. A question arises as to the scope of this redemption: Does the writer contemplate the redemption of all the transgressions that have mounted up during the period of the first covenant, or simply the transgressions of those who are called? Is it primarily the clearing of the inheritance itself, or the cleansing of the conscience, so that access to it may be given, that he has in mind? If Paul had been the author the former view would be probable. The death of Christ had reference to all the sins done aforetime. But the author of this Epistle regards sin mainly as preventing access to God, and we should therefore think probably of the conscience rather than the inheritance as freed. Those who are called are not simply the readers, who are freed from guilt incurred under Judaism; they include all the faithful of the Old Covenant, who could not enter on the inheritance because that covenant left their sins unremoved. This explains why apart from us they could not be made perfect and so could not receive the promise (xi. 39, 40). Even for the faithful dead the veil in the heavenly sanctuary was not removed till Christ entered through his own blood. The middle clause has also been explained of the Levitical sacrifices, in which case we should translate 'death' instead of 'a death.' The sense would then be that, just as the death of sacrificial victims was necessary under the Old Covenant, so also was it under the New. This is very improbable. If the thought is added that the death under the New Covenant gave to the old sacrifices what validity they possessed (so Farrar), a double reference is given to 'death,' and a validity attributed to sacrifices which according to the author they did not in any way possess.

16, 17. It is generally agreed that the author slips into using

the word translated 'covenant' in the sense of 'will.' The Greek word *diathēkē*[1] meant both, but its ambiguity does not survive in English. The meaning of the two verses is that, in order that a will may come into force, the testator must die. The implication is that Christ's death was necessary that the heavenly inheritance might be ours. It is clear that there is no logical connexion between the death which brings a will into force and the death which was needed to dedicate a covenant (verse 18). The ambiguity of the word covered for the author, as also for the Greek commentators, the logical hiatus. The statement was suggested by the reference to death in connexion with the New Covenant, coupled with the mention of the inheritance (verse 15). Naturally several scholars have wished to preserve the sense 'covenant' throughout (so, among others, Moulton, Westcott, Hatch, Rendall, Milligan). In favour of this may be urged not only the general consideration that the author is most likely to have retained the same meaning throughout, but the curious phraseology which he employs if he meant to speak of a will. This cannot be discussed without reference to the original. Further, will-making was almost unknown among the Jews. And again there is no support for the view that Christ bequeathed an inheritance to us. The general sense of the verses is on this interpretation taken to be that a covenant implies a death to ratify it, and is only of force over the dead, the death of the covenanter being in some sense assumed. It is, of course, true that covenants were often accompanied by the death of a victim; but it is not the case that there was any necessity in this, or that they could not be valid without it. Apart from ethnic covenant-rites, the O. T. recognizes that a covenant might be made without death. Thus David and Jonathan make a covenant by interchanging clothes and armour (1 Sam. xviii. 3, 4). The Hebrews covenant with the Gibeonites by taking of their food (bread and wine, not flesh) (Joshua ix. 3–15). Covenants were made by eating salt together. It would be no answer to say that God's covenants with men alone are meant, for the statement is general and universal. It is also very difficult to impose the sense 'covenant' on the passage, for then it asserts that a covenant implies the death of him who made it. Apart from the fact that there are two parties to a covenant, it is certainly not the case that those who make the covenant must die to give effect to it. This would be the way to nullify it. It does not seem a legitimate interpretation of the words to say that the covenanter is identified with the victim in his death on any tenable interpretation of its covenant significance. It seems impossible then to adopt the translation 'covenant.' Dr. Field rightly says: 'If the question were put to any person of common intelligence, "What

[1] διαθήκη.

the death of him that made it. For a testament is of 17
force where there hath been death: for doth it ever avail
while he that made it liveth? Wherefore even the first 18
covenant hath not been dedicated without blood. For 19
when every commandment had been spoken by Moses
unto all the people according to the law, he took the

document is that which is of no force at all during the lifetime of the person who executed it?" the answer can only be, "A man's *will* or testament."' The difficulty that wills were not familiar to Jews does not apply unless the Epistle was addressed to Palestine. And the fact that the Greek commentators without exception understood it as 'will,' and were conscious of no break in the argument, clearly proves that the author might, without consciousness of incongruity, pass from one sense of the word to the other. The passage thus becomes a passing illustration rather than a link in the argument.

16. there must of necessity be the death. The word translated 'be' means, as the margin says, to 'be brought.' This suits the interpretation 'covenant' better than the R.V. rendering. It would mean that the death must be 'brought in' or 'offered,' that is to say, in this case undergone by an animal as the covenanter's substitute. With the translation 'will' the selection of the word seems strange. Why did the author not say simply the testator must die? Probably the phrase means 'the death must be proved,' in which case the word is fitly chosen. Others translate 'must be announced.'

17. where there hath been death. Probably this expresses the meaning of 'over the dead' (marg.) better than 'over dead sacrifices,' which is the translation required by the rendering 'covenant.' Instead of the interrogative form of the last clause the margin gives 'for it doth never . . . liveth.'

18. The writer returns to the sense 'covenant' for *diathēkē*. He argues, since a *diathēkē* is not valid, apart from death, the first *diathēkē* was dedicated with blood. In English the inference does not follow, since we must translate by two different words, and we cannot argue that, because a 'will' is not valid till death, a 'covenant' must be dedicated with blood. He says 'even the first,' because in the case of a covenant so imperfect and transitory the blood dedication might have seemed unnecessary.

19, 20. A reference to the circumstances of the dedication of the first covenant, to prove that it was not without blood. The narrative occurs in Exod. xxiv. 3-8; but several additions are made by the author. 'Goats' are not mentioned, and it is difficult to assume that they are included in the burnt-offerings, for they

blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet
wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself, and
20 all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant
21 which God commanded to you-ward. Moreover the
tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled
22 in like manner with the blood. And according to the

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were not appointed for that purpose in the law (in Lev. i. 10 a different word is used). The author seems to be relying on memory, as his quotation in verse 20 is somewhat free. The 'water, scarlet wool and hyssop' are also not referred to in Exod. xxiv. Water was mingled with blood to dilute it. In the cleansing of the leper, a bird was killed over a vessel containing 'running water,' and then a live bird, along with cedar-wood and scarlet, and hyssop, was dipped in the blood, and the leper was then sprinkled (Lev. xiv. 4–7). The scarlet wool was probably used to tie the hyssop on to the cedar rod to make a sprinkler for the blood. Hyssop was used to sprinkle blood (Exod. xii. 22), and 'the water of separation' (Num. xix. 18). So in Ps. li. 7 we read,' Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.' Cedar, hyssop, and scarlet were also burnt with the red heifer (Num. xix. 6), for which see note on verse 13. Later, blood and water gained a mystical significance (1 John v. 6; cf. John xix. 34). Further, there is no reference in the narrative in Exodus to the sprinkling of the book; the writer would infer it from the general principle laid down in verse 22, perhaps also from the title Book of the Covenant, the covenant demanding blood. It may have been mentioned in tradition, which spoke of the book as placed on the altar, which was sprinkled, as representing God, while the people were sprinkled as the other party to the covenant.

20. Quoted from Exod. xxiv. 8, where the LXX reads in agreement with the Hebrew, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you.' The form of the quotation may have been influenced by the words of Christ at the institution of the Supper.

21. Here also the author goes beyond the O. T. record. The words 'with the blood' would suggest that this took place at the time when the covenant was dedicated, but since the tabernacle was not then in existence, we should hardly, with Weiss, attribute such an error to him. The Pentateuch knows only of an anointing of the tabernacle and its furniture with oil (Exod. xl. 9–11). Josephus, however, makes a similar statement, and both probably rest on Jewish tradition.

22. These are but illustrations of an almost universal legal principle. The writer is conscious that there are exceptions to

law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.

It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things 23

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the rule. Thus bathing in water, or passing through fire (Num. xxxi. 22, 23) might be used for purification, and there was remission of sin without shedding of blood in the case of those too poor to offer an animal sacrifice. The latter part of the verse, as well as the former, speaks simply of a principle which holds good in the law.

shedding of blood. This is probably the meaning, rather than 'outpouring of blood,' since the important point in the argument is the death of the victim, rather than the pouring out of the blood at the altar, though in itself the latter is the more important.

ix. 23–28. *The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the finality of Christ's redemption.* While the copy must be cleansed with animal blood, better sacrifices are needed to cleanse the heavenly original. For our high-priest has entered into God's presence in heaven, not often repeating a sacrifice of another's blood, but once for all offering himself. Thus he needs to die no more, and when he appears again it will be to bring salvation to his waiting followers.

23. The meaning seems to be that while the copies of the things in the heavens could be cleansed with the blood of animal victims, for the cleansing of the heavenly original better sacrifices were required. The verb in the second clause must be supplied, and it is most natural to supply it from the first. It is only to avoid the thought, that the heavenly sanctuary and its vessels needed cleansing, that some have supplied 'should be dedicated' in the second clause. What is meant by the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary must be determined by its meaning as applied to the earthly. The ritual of the Day of Atonement was designed, not merely to atone for the sins of the people, but to make atonement for the sanctuary itself. The sense of this would seem to be that the constant sin of Israel had communicated a certain uncleanness to the sanctuary. Similarly the sin of mankind might be supposed to have cast its shadow even into heaven. It hung like a thick curtain between God and man, preventing free fellowship, and that not only because it defiled the conscience, so that man was ill at ease with God, but because it introduced a disturbing element into the life of God Himself. Looking at it from a somewhat different point of view, we might take the cleansing to be identical with the removal of the veil in the heavenly sanctuary (see note on verse 11), since cleansing is for the sake of access. Bleek and others suggest that the reference is to the casting of Satan out of heaven on the exaltation of Christ. But there is nothing to

in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than
24 these. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven
25 itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: nor

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support this in the passage. It might be possible to connect it with the reconciliation of things in the heavens (Col. i. 20), especially in view of the author's interest in angelology. The popular division of angels into two classes, the perfectly good and the irretrievably bad, does not correspond to the N. T. doctrine. It is hardly likely that we should look in this direction for light on the passage, for the author's interest in angels was mainly theoretical, and 'not of angels doth he take hold.' Nor can we explain the passage by the view, held in various circles of Jewish theology, that hell and the fallen angels were to be found in the lower heavens. For it is not of the purification of these heavens that he speaks, but of that of the heavenly sanctuary itself, which lies beyond them.

the copies of the things in the heavens. That is, the tabernacle and its vessels which were made after the pattern shewn to Moses in the mount (viii. 5).

with these: the sacrifices referred to in verses 19–22.

better sacrifices. The plural is used because, though Christ's sacrifice is one, it gathers up what was typified in the different sacrifices of the Jewish Law.

24. This necessity, expressed in verse 23, has been met by Christ, 'for' he has entered into heaven itself, not into the Holy Place of human manufacture, a mere imitation of the genuine and original. The verse practically takes up again the train of ideas expressed in verses 11, 12.

to appear before the face of God. There may be a contrast implied between the clear, unrestricted manifestation of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and the concealment of the high-priest on the Day of Atonement in the dense cloud of incense. The thought is of the manifestation of Christ to God rather than of God to Christ.

25–28. The leading thought in these verses is that Christ has made one offering and one only, in contrast to the yearly offering of the high-priest. The argument is as follows. While the high-priest had to enter each year into the Holy of Holies, with blood other than his own, Christ has entered the heavenly sanctuary once for all, through the sacrifice of himself. If his sacrifice had been such as to permit of repetition, he would often have suffered since the foundation of the world, whereas he has suffered only

yet that he should offer himself often ; as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own ; else must he often have suffered since the founda- 26
tion of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of

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once. And this is not the beginning of a series, for the end of the ages is at hand, and therefore no time is left for such a series to be completed. Indeed, the thought of a repeated death is contrary to all human experience. Death is the crisis, which comes only once, and is final, since judgement follows upon it. And so with Christ; his death happens but once, and when he leaves the heavenly sanctuary it will be for the final bringing in of the Messianic salvation. The author does not explain why, if the sacrifice were to be repeated, it must have occurred often 'since the foundation of the world.' He means, apparently, that repetition implies limited efficacy, and therefore as soon as sin began in the world the Redeemer would need to deal with it, before the arrears of transgression became so great that no single atonement could cancel them.

25. nor yet that he should offer himself often: cf. 'once for all' in verse 12. The offering referred to is his self-presentation in the heavenly sanctuary, as is clear both from verse 24 and the parallel with the high-priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies with the blood.

with blood not his own: cf. 'through the blood of goats and calves' in verse 12. In that verse the author adds, 'but through his own blood.' Here he does not say, Christ entered with his own blood. Probably he felt that this might lend itself to a crude, materialistic interpretation, as if Christ carried in his physical blood into heaven. But while such a thought is out of the question, the writer must have supposed that something corresponded to the presentation of the blood, in which the service of the Day of Atonement reached its climax. The blood was the life poured out in death, and Christ presented himself, after obediently surrendering his life to God, to make this pouring out of his soul unto death the complete putting away of sin.

26. the end of the ages: that is, as the margin renders, their 'consummation.' This is the goal towards which the ages have been moving, and which they have attained with the sacrifice of Christ. The writer, in common with early Christians generally, regarded the Second Coming as near at hand.

to put away sin. The expression is stronger than this translation suggests, it means to 'annul sin' (cf. vii. 18). The singular 'sin' is used here, because the writer is thinking of sin as a prin-

himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men
once to die, and after this *cometh* judgement; so Christ
also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many,
shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that
wait for him, unto salvation.

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ciple ruling in human life and defiling it, rather than of individual acts of transgression. 'By the sacrifice of himself' is better than the margin, 'by his sacrifice.'

27. The thought is that death is not an incident in man's career, but its definite close, and since the career has reached its end, judgement may be passed upon it. The death of Christ is stamped with a similar finality. 'Appointed' is literally 'laid up for' (marg.).

after this. It is not clear whether the author is speaking of a judgement to follow immediately on death, or of the Last Judgement.

28. The main thought of the verse seems to be that Christ's death cancelled sin so completely that he can have no further connexion with it, but just as life, completed by death, is followed, not by a new term of life, but by judgement, so the life of Christ has fulfilled its purpose so completely that nothing remains to be done save to let its issues work themselves out. There is a parallel between the judgement which follows man's death and the salvation which Christ brings to his waiting followers. We might have expected the author to refer to the appearance of Christ in judgement. But this would have yielded a mere verbal parallel, for the two statements, Man dies and receives judgement, and Christ dies and pronounces judgement, form no real parallel. There is a true correspondence in the author's words. There is a causal connexion between death and judgement, and so between Christ's death and salvation. In neither case is there mere temporal sequence.

to bear the sins of many: the phrase 'to bear sins' may mean to bear the punishment of sins. Or it may mean to bear away sins. Or the thought may be similar to that in 1 Peter ii. 24, to bear the sins with him to the cross, that on it they might be destroyed. In any case sin is so completely done away with that he needs to die no more. 'Many,' which is probably suggested by Isa. liii. 12, is used, not to limit the extent of the atonement, as if it were not for all, but to indicate how large was the number for whom the single death of one man sufficed (cf. Rom. v. 15, 20; Mark x. 45).

shall appear a second time. It is true that he will leave the heavenly sanctuary, but not, as the Jewish high-priest, with the prospect of having to repeat the sacrifice still before him, but

For the law having a shadow of the good *things* to **10**

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to make over to his people the salvation achieved effectually by the one offering. The reference is to the Second Coming, believed by the primitive church to be always imminent.

apart from sin. His first coming was not 'apart from sin'; he was the sin-bearer, and his work found its climax in his conflict with it. Now he has put it away (verse 26), he is separated from sinners (vii. 26), and thus all connexion with sin is severed (cf. Paul's 'The death that he died, he died unto sin once,' Rom. vi. 10). The phrase bears another meaning in iv. 15.

to them that wait for him: cf. 1 Thess. i. 10; 1 Cor. i. 7; Phil. iii. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 8, also Rom. viii. 19, 23, 25. There may be a reference to the strained suspense with which the people awaited the high-priest's return from the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. This was felt in a slight degree even in the ordinary ministry of the priests (Luke i. 21).

unto salvation: probably to be connected with 'shall appear,' though it might be, and is by some, connected with 'them that wait for him.'

x. 1–18. *The ineffectiveness of the sacrifices of the Law, and the perfect efficacy of Christ's sacrifice.* The law's unreality makes its repeated sacrifices of no avail, for their repetition proves that they can only bring the worshipper's guilt to mind, but cannot cleanse the conscience, for no animal sacrifice can take away sins. Therefore Jesus offered no animal victim, but one according to God's will—his own body which God had prepared for him—and thus we have been sanctified. While the priests stand offering daily ineffective sacrifice, he offered one sacrifice, effective for ever, and sat at God's right hand.

The author is now nearing the close of his formal argument. He draws out more fully the inferiority of the Levitical sacrifices to that of Christ, going back on some points already touched on, but adding much that is new and striking in a forcible, though obscure and somewhat broken, style.

1. a shadow: cf. viii. 5. Here the contrast is between 'shadow' and 'image.' The latter is precise and sharply defined in its outline, the former, unsteady and indistinct. But probably the contrast between shadow and substance is also expressed, for the 'image' is a reproduction in facsimile, not a mere pictorial representation. The law, then, suffers from a double defect: it gives so blurred an outline of Christianity ('the good things to come') that no one would recognize what original it was meant to portray, and it was vitiated by a radical unreality, which made its vast machinery ineffective for producing any worthy result.

come, not the very image of the things, they can never
with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer
2 continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else
would they not have ceased to be offered, because the
worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had
3 no more conscience of sins? But in those *sacrifices*
4 there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. For
it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should

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they can never. Such is the best attested reading, and, if correct, we must suppose that the sentence breaks off, and regard the subject of this verb as 'the priests.' But the text translated in the margin 'it can' is intrinsically so much better, that it should be accepted, in spite of its inferior documentary attestation. The plural is probably due to assimilation to 'they offer.' The subject of the verb is then 'the law.' At the same time it is quite possible, as Hort suggests, that the original reading has not been preserved.

with the same sacrifices year by year: probably the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, though the whole round of sacrifices through the year may be included. The constant repetition proves their ineffectiveness.

continually. It is perhaps better to connect this word with the following clause, translating 'perfect for ever them that draw nigh.' So far from doing this, such effect as they had was of the most temporary character. The translation in the text involves a certain tautology.

2. If these sacrifices could have made the worshippers perfect, they would not have needed to be repeated, for the conscience, being cleansed from guilt, would have been free from the sense of sin. 'Once cleansed' means cleansed once for all.

3. But what the sacrifices do is to bring sin to remembrance rather than to purge it away. If they had to be thus repeated, it could only be because sin needed constantly to be atoned for.

4. Here the writer goes to the heart of the matter. The inadequacy of the Jewish sacrifices rests on the very nature of things. It is essentially impossible that the blood of animal victims should cleanse a human conscience from guilt, for in such sacrifices there is no conscious and voluntary, and therefore no moral, element. Nor is there any real community between offerer and victim. We thus see one reason why the writer lays such immense stress on the Incarnation and real human experience of Christ. He becomes man, not simply that he may sympathize with us, but that he may offer himself for us. Vicarious sacrifice is a principle profoundly true, but he who sacrifices himself for

take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the 5
world, he saith,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not,

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others must first be one with them. The author's criticism of the Levitical sacrifices is obvious enough to us, but should not blind us to his superiority to the common Jewish conception, and the importance of the moral test which he applies. Probably this verse seemed to his readers very revolutionary, though that coarse animal sacrifices could not effect a spiritual end should have been a self-evidencing truth. He therefore establishes his position by an appeal to Scripture.

5. The quotation is from Ps. xl. 6-8. This psalm is thought by many (though not by Wellhausen) to consist of two originally distinct psalms, the former ending with verse 11. Its date is not clear, but it seems to be later than Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, and is probably post-exilic. The passage quoted is in the original exposed to several exegetical difficulties, and some recent critics emend the text very freely (so Duhm, Cheyne in *The Christian Use of the Psalms*, and Wellhausen, less radically, in the *Polychrome Bible*). These questions need no discussion here. But there is a striking variation from the Hebrew in the LXX, which is followed in the Epistle. The Hebrew literally means 'Ears hast thou digged for me,' by which is meant that God has opened the ears of the speaker to hear his voice. The translation 'a body didst thou prepare for me' is thought by some to be a free rendering, but by others, with greater probability, to rest on an early error in the Greek text, the last letter of the word 'thou wouldest' with the word for 'ears' being read by mistake as 'body[1]'. The author is justified in appealing to this psalm, which, though not containing precisely a polemic against sacrifice, yet, like Psalms l and li, throws the emphasis of religion elsewhere, and treats sacrifice as non-essential—one of the numerous indications that the post-exilic period was not so legalistic and unspiritual as is often imagined. The words 'a body didst thou prepare me,' which the author referred to the Incarnation, no doubt facilitated the use of the passage here, and may have determined the choice of it.

when he cometh into the world. When he left his heavenly life and came into the world. The reference is not to his entrance on his public ministery.

sacrifice and offering denote respectively animal and vegetable offerings.

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[1] *ἠθέλησας ὠτία* being read as if *ἠθέλησας σῶμα*, hardly, as Farrar says, *κατηρτίσας ὠτία* being read as *κατηρτίσας σῶμα*.

But a body didst thou prepare for me;
6 In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou
hadst no pleasure:
7 Then said I, Lo, I am come
(In the roll of the book it is written of me)
To do thy will, O God.
8 Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt
offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou wouldest not, neither
hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according
9 to the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy
will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish

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a body didst thou prepare for me. The sacrifice of Jesus was assimilated to that of animal victims, in that it was the offering up of a body. A body was needed for a blood-offering. But for the animal the body was a mere vehicle of physical life, whereas for Jesus it was the instrument of his moral training and the organ of intercourse with his fellow men. To do God's will was ever the joy of the eternal Son, but to do it in the body, where the very constitution of his nature made its full gratification a disobedience to his Father's will, was proof of moral devotion under unprecedented difficulties. Thus the lifelong sacrifice of the body, which culminated in the death, was not that involuntary and non-moral sacrifice of the beast, but the free and deliberate surrender of life to God, of his own, not that of another.

6. Closer definition of the type of sacrifice in which God has no pleasure.

7. The Son, understanding his Father's repugnance to these sacrifices, declares that he is coming to do God's will. This will is accomplished in the offering of the body prepared to this end by God.

In the roll of the book. The word translated 'roll' is generally said to mean originally the knob at the end of the stick on which the parchment scroll was rolled, and so to be used for the roll itself. The reference in the psalm is a little uncertain; probably the author of the Epistle thought of the O. T. generally.

8. (**the which are offered according to the law**). Their legalist character is hinted as a defect.

9. This verse sets the act of Christ in opposition to the sacrifices of the law, and treats it as superseding them. The question arises whether the author means simply that the sacrifice he offered was of a kind well-pleasing to God, whereas

the second. By which will we have been sanctified 10
through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once
for all. And every priest indeed standeth day by day 11

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those of the law did not please Him, or whether he means more than this, that what gave Christ's act its efficacy was the spirit of obedience in which it was done. This stress on the moral quality of the sacrifice agrees well with the rejection of animal sacrifice, the defect in which lay largely in its non-moral character. And in any case it is difficult to suppose that the author was blind to this great thought, that the Son's perfect submission to the Father's will, his obedience to death, constituted much of the atoning power of his work. Yet it may be doubted if that thought is expressed here. The author does not expound a philosophy of sacrifice. Why it had atoning power was for him a question less urgent than for us, since Scripture revealed it as a matter of Divine appointment. And it is surely significant that the words 'I delight' are omitted from the quotation. If the author's point had been that the value of the offering lay in the spirit in which it was made, would just those words in which the spirit found fullest expression have been omitted as unimportant for his purpose?

10. Since the will of God has been thus satisfied in the sacrifice of Christ, we have been 'sanctified' by it (marg. 'in'). Sanctification has not the meaning here which is commonly attached to it in theology. It is primarily a ritual term. In the Jewish ritual sanctification was effected by ritual methods, such as washing or blood-sprinkling, the result of which was that the worshipper was released from his uncleanness and able to enter into the presence of God. The word has a corresponding sense here. By the offering of Christ's body, a sacrifice according to God's will, we have been so sanctified that we are able to enter into fellowship with God. That which hindered communion has been removed. This was not, as in the Jewish ritual, some physical condition, but a guilty conscience. What is needed for the renewal of communion is the removal of the sense of guilt. When the sinner realizes that his sin has been borne by Christ, that the sacrifice which can cleanse from guilt has been offered, he feels that the barrier between himself and God has been broken, and communion with Him has been permanently re-established.

the offering of the body: on the cross, not in the heavenly sanctuary.

11–13. Christ's session at the right hand of God proves the efficacy of his offering. His work stands in contrast not simply to that of the high-priest on the Day of Atonement, but to that of

ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices,
12 the which can never take away sins: but he, when he
had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on
13 the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till
14 his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. For by
one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are
15 sanctified. And the Holy Ghost also beareth witness to
us: for after he hath said,

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the common priests. Every day they offer sacrifices, which can never cancel sin. Their mighty labour, like that of Sisyphus, ends always in nothing. The pathetic inefficiency of all this elaborate apparatus, this daily addition of nought to nought, which at the end of the long centuries have mounted up to zero, is all the more striking in the light of Christ's sacrifice, offered once only but effective for ever. He now sits at God's right hand, having achieved an offering acceptable to God, while the Jewish priest still stands to offer those useless sacrifices, sad spectacle of belated incompetence. And the session, glorious though it is, is but the prelude to final triumph over his foes.

priest. The marginal reading 'high-priest' has strong MS. attestation, but is probably due to conformation of the language to v. 1, viii. 3. The objection to the reading in the text, that it is not true that 'every priest' offered daily, misses the author's obvious meaning. The accumulation of words to bring out the repetition of the sacrifices ('day by day,' 'oftentimes,' 'the same') is remarkable.

take away: a strong word, meaning 'to strip off.'

12. for ever. The punctuation in the text is much better than that in the margin, 'sins, for ever sat down,' &c., expressing not, of course, that the sacrifice is offered through eternity, but that the one sacrifice has abiding effects, as is explained in verse 14.

13. The time for which he waits is the Second Coming.

14. He has only this subjugation of his foes to wait for, since his single offering has this never-ending efficacy, that those whom it sanctifies are made by it for ever complete.

15-18. And this is further proved by Scripture. In the prophecy of the New Covenant, God, after He has promised to write His law on the heart, adds that He will no longer remember their sins. But if sins have been forgiven, no further sacrifice is needed to atone for them. For the formula of quotation cf. iii. 7, and for the quotation itself viii. 10-12.

This is the covenant that I will make with them 16
After those days, saith the Lord;
I will put my laws on their heart,
And upon their mind also will I write them;
then saith he,
And their sins and their iniquities will I remember 17
no more.
Now where remission of these is, there is no more 18
offering for sin.
Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into 19

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16. then saith he. The Greek probably forms an incomplete sentence, rightly completed in English by the addition of these words.

x. 19-25. *Draw near and hold fast.* Since Jesus has dedicated for us a new way to the heavenly sanctuary, where he is priest, let us draw near in faith, cleansed from our guilty past, and hold fast our hope; stimulating each other to deeds of service, and not forsaking our own assembly, especially since the day draws nigh.

19. The writer has now concluded his formal argument, though he has still much to say in which he strengthens and develops certain sides of it. But now his aim is to drive home the practical lessons of his exposition. If Christianity has successfully achieved what even Judaism was unable to perform, if it has given unto us the forgiveness of sins, the removal of guilt, and unrestricted fellowship with God, then our plain duty is to hold firmly to it, not ungratefully despising the great good thus offered, and not failing to use to the full the benefits thus secured. It is clear that the author is not engaged in a mere academic discussion as to the relative merits of Judaism and Christianity. It is because he feels so intensely the imminent peril of his readers, that he speaks with such intensity of warning and appeal. It is hardly credible, if he had been writing to Gentile Christians, with a temptation to forsake Christianity but none to fall away to Judaism, that he would have devoted so elaborate an argument to proving that Judaism was worn out and inferior to Christianity.

boldness to enter into the holy place. The Jewish sanctuary was inaccessible to the worshipper. He dared not enter in for fear of the penalty of sacrilege. But for us the way has been opened into the heavenly sanctuary, and we may enter in glad confidence without fear of rebuff. For we pass into it by virtue of 'the blood of Jesus.' We do not enter it with

20 the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which
he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the
21 veil, that is to say, his flesh; and *having* a great priest

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the blood. How the blood enables us to enter the following verses explain.

20. by the way which he dedicated for us. The author does not dwell here on the fact that Christ's blood has so cleansed us as to fit us for entering, but that he has inaugurated a way by which we may enter. Hitherto there had been no way. Christ has opened the way in that he has himself entered by it, and he is our Captain in whose steps we follow. The writer may have had in mind the prophecy as to the 'holy way' for pilgrims to the temple, over which the unclean might not pass (Isa. xxxv. 8). The way is 'new,' and in this there may be a reference to the dedication of roads by sacrifice (according to the common view that the word meant originally 'newly slain,' though in usage it had come to mean simply 'new'). It is 'living' (cf. iv. 12), is effective in bringing man to the goal of fellowship with the living God in the living Christ.

through the veil. The way has been opened by the removal of the veil, which hitherto had blocked the entrance. This veil is the 'flesh' of Christ, which while he was on earth shut him out of the heavenly sanctuary. To gain access to it the veil had to be taken away, in other words, he had to die. But the question arises, If Christ, why not we too? Is it not true for us also that the veil must be done away in each case, before we can enter; must we not die that we may pass into heaven? This, once more, is an instance of the collision between the actual and the ideal. This veil of flesh hangs for all of us before the heavenly Holy Place, and hangs there still. We have to cast our anchor to the other side of it, and thus by hope feel ourselves bound to that heaven, to which we truly belong. But there is something stronger than hope, and that is faith. While hope is certain of realization in the future, faith achieves realization in the present. And thus faith carries us beyond the veil and gives us here and now unbroken communion with God. It seems clear that 'through' must not be explained as equivalent to 'by means of,' for a veil is not a means of entrance, but a barrier which has to be put out of the way. The reference cannot therefore be to the Incarnation. Westcott thinks the objections to identifying the veil with the flesh render it probable that it should be explained 'that is to say, a way of his flesh.' The way, in other words, consists in his true human nature. But the difficulty that Christ's flesh should be regarded as an obstacle to the vision of God is one which it is not quite easy to estimate, and which will

over the house of God; let us draw near with a true 22
heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from
an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water:
let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver 23
not; for he is faithful that promised: and let us consider 24

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be estimated very differently by different minds. Some, at least, will feel that such a view harmonizes well with the general tenor of the Epistle, and it is not probable that many will feel the objection so acutely as to prefer this new interpretation of the passage. Nor is it perhaps quite certain that this highly suggestive passage cannot be worked into the typological scheme of the Epistle.

21. Not only is there a new way by which we may freely go, but he who rules the sanctuary is our own great Priest, and this assures us of welcome as we draw near.

a great priest: cf. iv. 14. The term is often used in the O.T., both Hebrew and LXX. Here it is chosen, instead of the usual high-priest, to emphasize his sovereign rule 'over the house of God' (cf. iii. 6).

22. A threefold exhortation, based on these encouraging facts, now follows: draw near, hold fast, stimulate each other. iv. 14–16 contains the first two of these, but in reverse order.

with a true heart: a sincere, single heart with no doubleness or reserve towards God.

in fulness of faith: since it is faith alone that can take us within the veil. On 'fulness' (marg. 'full assurance') see vi. 11. The combination of faith, hope, love in this passage is noteworthy.

having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. The phrase is compressed. It means having our hearts sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and thus cleansed from the consciousness of guilt (cf. ix. 14). So sacrificial blood was used in the consecration of priests (Exod. xxix. 20, 21; Lev. viii. 23, 24, 30), and the words 'our body washed with pure water' have their analogy in the same ceremony (Exod. xxix. 4). There is probably a reference to baptism, though the thought rests on the inward cleansing which it typified (cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 25). The connexion of the latter clause with the next sentence (as in the marg. 'conscience; and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast') is less probable.

23. Relying on the faithfulness of God (cf. xi. 11), and therefore on the sure fulfilment of His promise, we should hold firmly to the confession of our hope. This confession was that first made at baptism.

24. We should not concentrate our thoughts on ourselves

25 one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the

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alone, careful merely about our own steadfastness, but on the needs of others, stimulating them continually to that love and practical charity, which is the best preservative of firmness in the faith.

25. If the author means that some were already forsaking the Christian assemblies, he would feel that this was ominous of an approaching lapse from Christianity altogether. He knows that in the communion of saints lies one of the surest guarantees of adherence to the faith. But he may not mean so much as this. Zahn argues forcibly that the author is chiding Christians for leaving their own congregation in vexation, and resorting to other Christian congregations in the same city, instead of staying at their post and helping their weaker brethren. This suits the meaning of the word translated 'forsaking,' which means 'leaving in the lurch.' And whether we accept this view or not, it would probably be better to translate 'our assembly' rather than 'the 'assembling of ourselves together.' It is also in harmony with the context. He exhorts them to help others in the Christian life, so that those whom he is specially addressing would hardly be themselves forsaking the Christian assemblies. Nor is this suggested by what follows. The reference to the near approach of 'the day,' and to the danger of falling away, might be to a peril not threatening those to whom he is specially speaking, but rather those whom they ought to exhort and save. If this view is correct, the readers must have lived in a large town, in which there were other Christian congregations. 'The day,' whose approach makes his exhortation so much more urgent, is the Second Coming, which was then thought to be close at hand. If the Epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, the writer may have thought of this as ushering in 'the day'; it was, in a sense, a coming of Christ, by which a decisive break was effected between the old and the new and the Jewish dispensation came to a definite end.

x. 26–31. *The fate of the wilful sinner.* Judgement, and not atoning sacrifice, awaits wilful sin against light. Unpitying as was the doom of transgressors against the law, how much sorer will be that inflicted on those who trample on the Son of God by that vengeful God, into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall.

knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgement, 27
and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries.
A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without 28
compassion on *the word of* two or three witnesses: of 29
how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged
worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God,

This deeply solemn warning against the perils of apostasy is even more severe than that in ch. vi, though it has close affinities with it, and is to be interpreted in a precisely similar way. The line of argument in verses 28, 29 recalls that in ii. 1–4, though here the reference is not so much to neglect of the revelation given in the Son as to insulting rejection of his sacrifice. What makes the case so hopeless is that they who commit the sin spoken of have themselves been Christians, and therefore sin after they have received a knowledge of the truth. The wilful sin of which the author speaks is that of deliberate apostasy from Christianity.

26. For. The connexion may be: we ought to be the more zealous in our exhortation as the day approaches, since the judgement it will bring to the apostate is so terrible.

if we sin wilfully. The tense expresses not a single act but a state, and this is a state deliberately chosen and persisted in. For sin with a high hand no atonement was provided in the law, and probably this fact largely determines the author's point of view.

knowledge: or better, 'full knowledge': they have a ripe acquaintance with Christian truth.

there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins. Judaism obviously cannot offer such a sacrifice, for with that of Christ the old sacrifices have lost all value, nor will Christ's offering be repeated, so that if they reject his work, their one hope is gone.

27. a certain fearful expectation. The author heightens the terror of his words both by the indefinite 'a certain,' whose vagueness leaves room for the imagination, and by making the mere 'expectation' so awful.

a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. The words are largely taken from Isa. xxvi. 11. The margin 'jealousy' is more suggestive.

28. The reference is to the punishment of idolatry (Deut. xvii. 2–7), a sin corresponding closely to that spoken of here.

29. If such was the punishment unrelentingly visited on defiance of the Law of Moses, how far more terrible must be that inflicted on the apostate from Christianity. For think of all that apostasy

and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith
he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite
30 unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that said,
Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And
31 again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful
thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which,

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involves. It is a trampling on the Son of God himself, a counting of that covenant-blood, whose sanctifying power he had himself experienced, as an impure thing (*lit.* 'a common thing'); it is a blasphemous insult against that Spirit through whom the grace of God has come.

30, 31. It is not to be imagined that God will lightly pass over such conduct. There is a stern side to His character, and it is terrible to fall into His hands. The first quotation comes from Deut. xxxii. 35. In the Hebrew this runs, 'Vengeance is mine and recompense,' in the LXX, 'In the day of vengeance I will recompense.' The text here agrees only with the latter part of the LXX version. It is a very interesting fact that Paul quotes it in the same way (Rom. xii. 19), though in the sense that we should leave God to avenge us. The coincidence between Romans and our Epistle is difficult to account for. Several think that the author quotes from Paul. It is more probable that the words in this form had passed into a kind of religious proverb. The Targum of Onkelos renders them similarly, and perhaps the quotation is ultimately derived from some current version. The second quotation is found both in Deut. xxxii. 36 and in Ps. cxxxv. 14. It has been suggested, on account of the variation in the first quotation, that the passage in Deuteronomy was not before the author's mind, and that this second quotation is from the Psalm. It is more probable that both come from Deuteronomy. It remains only to mention that the application in the Epistle is different. The original speaks of vengeance on the enemies of Israel and God's vindication of His people, the Epistle speaks of vengeance on the unfaithful of His people.

31. a fearful thing. A reference to 'fearful expectation' in verse 27.

the living God. Better, 'a living God'; see note on iii. 12.

x. 32–39. *Let the readers be worthy of their glorious past.* Let them recall their former sufferings and sympathy with others, and patiently hold fast their confidence, assured of the fulfilment of the prophetic word, that the Lord shall soon come, and the

after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; partly, being made a gazingstock both by 33
reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers

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righteous live by faith. We are not such as shrink back, but such as have saving faith.

32, 33. The severe warning is followed, as in ch. vi, by an assurance that the past history of the Church and the readers gives warrant for a better hope. It is noteworthy that in both passages the author finds his justification for this hope in the practical goodness and brotherly love of the readers, while in the one before us he adds their joyful endurance of persecution. The latter testified eloquently to the reality of their faith, because they were ready to suffer for it; the former is mentioned because their kindness to Christians revealed a true devotion to Christ. The references to persecution would help us to determine more certainly the identity of the Church addressed if we knew the details more definitely. A period of persecution lies in the past, and it seems to have been experienced shortly after the founding of the Church ('after ye were enlightened'; cf. vi. 4). They had endured 'a great conflict,' consisting in 'sufferings.' This is spoken of as it affected the readers and their fellow sufferers. It is important to bear this in mind, for the striking expression 'being made a gazingstock' or a 'theatrical display' (*theatrizomenoi*) is used of the readers themselves. Were this not the case, it might very naturally have been interpreted of one of the most horrible features of the Neronian persecution. 'Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car' (Tacitus, *Annals* xv. 44, quoted from Church and Brodrib's translation). But those who passed through these experiences, in which some of the most dreadful stories of mythology were not merely represented but re-enacted, were not the survivors to whom this epithet is applied. Paul uses the cognate noun when he speaks of himself and the other apostles as having become a spectacle (*theatron*) to the world and angels and men. The addition of the words 'by reproaches and afflictions' also gives the word a milder sense than would suit the more terrible aspects, at any rate, of the Neronian persecution. Not only did they suffer in this way, but they became 'partakers' of those who suffered similarly, boldly accepting partnership with them.

34 with them that were so used. For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye yourselves have a better possession and an abiding one.
35 Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great
36 recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.
37 For yet a very little while,
He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.

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34. Confirms verse 33. They shewed practical sympathy with the prisoners, and joyfully accepted the plundering of their goods. The former was honourably characteristic of the early Christians. The false reading in the A. V., 'Ye had compassion of me in my bonds,' largely contributed to the ascription of the Epistle to Paul (cf. Col. iv. 18; Phil. i. 17).

that ye yourselves have a better possession. The reading 'for yourselves' should probably be set aside as insufficiently supported. The true text may be translated either as in the R. V. text, or the margin, 'that ye have your own selves for a better possession.' The objection to the former is that the addition of 'yourselves' seems to be pointless, for it suggests a contrast between what they had and what others had, which has no place here, for there is no mention of the present possessors of their goods. The latter avoids this difficulty, and may be illustrated by the words of Christ, 'In your patience ye shall win your souls' (Luke xxi. 19), and 'the gaining of the soul' in verse 39. It is true that this thought seems a little far-fetched, but it is fine and suggestive, and perhaps on account of verse 39 should, on the whole, be accepted.

35. Animated by the memory of this glorious past, let them cling firmly to their 'confidence,' which will receive 'great recompense of reward' (ii. 2, xi. 26).

36. The exhortation of verse 35 is justified by the fact, already urged upon them in ch. iv, that their great need is 'patience,' that they may gain the promised reward.

37. An explanation why patience is needed, and an encouragement to exercise it. The passage is quoted from Hab. ii. 3, 4, the introductory words 'yet a little while' being taken from Isa. xxvi. 20. The words of Habakkuk are very faultily rendered by the LXX, and further adapted by the author. Clauses are transposed, and the Messianic reference ('he that cometh') is

But my righteous one shall live by faith 38
And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure
in him.
But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; 39
but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul.
Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the 11

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introduced. According to the original, the prophet, dismayed by the prosperity of the idolatrous oppressor and the suffering of righteous Judah, receives the assurance that this anomaly is only for a brief period, and that the great quality needed by the righteous is that of steadfast faithfulness to God which will secure his life. Here the author brings out the sense that the Messiah will come very speedily, that the righteous shall live by faith, but he that draws back will lose the favour of God.

38. my righteous one shall live by faith. A famous passage, alike for its use among the Rabbis and by Paul. The latter makes it the Scriptural basis of his doctrine of Justification by Faith. Paul's use of it implies a different sense of the word 'faith' from that in which the author employs it, and one much further removed from the meaning of Habakkuk. The passage forms a kind of text to the following chapter. Some ancient authorities read 'the righteous one' (marg.).

if he shrink back. The word was originally used of shortening sail. The conduct described is directly opposite to that loyal faithfulness by which life is won. The meaning attached by the author to 'my soul hath no pleasure in him' is clear from 'unto perdition' in the next verse.

39. The author refuses to believe that his readers are guilty of cowardly defection. They have that faith which issues in the winning (marg. 'gaining') of the soul. What this faith is he proceeds to make clear in the next chapter.

xi. This chapter is usually regarded as part of the author's exhortation to his readers to stand firm. There is no question that it fulfils that function, but it also seems to have an intimate relation to the underlying conceptions of his argument. We have already seen that the writer works with the conception of the two ages. The age to come he represents as in a sense already realized, but in another sense as still lying in the future. In other words, his contrast is between the ideal and the actual. Now it might be pertinently urged that this very fact constituted a serious objection to his argument. If we live in this age, why should we accept the religion of the age to come? and has Jesus put us in any better position than those who lived under the Old

Covenant? How can we enter into the heavenly sanctuary until the veil be done away for us, as it was for him? The writer surmounts these difficulties by his doctrine of Faith. While we are strangers and pilgrims we are not actually inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. But faith has this quality—that it can lift us into fellowship with the Unseen, that it can carry us within the veil. And so, while we are still inhabitants of this world, we may at any moment through faith draw nigh and enter into the world to come. Faith has thus a power of realization, by which the invisible becomes visible and the future becomes present. While hope is the confident anticipation of a future regarded as future, faith appropriates that future as an experience of the present.

xi. 1–7. *Faith.* The nature of faith and its exemplification in our belief in the creative power of God, in the sacrifice of Abel, the translation of Enoch, and Noah's building of the ark.

1. The author does not intend to give a formal definition of faith so much as to single out those aspects of it to which he especially wishes to invite the attention of his readers. The translation of this verse is somewhat doubtful. 'Assurance' represents the word translated 'substance' in i. 3 and 'confidence' in iii. 14. The former of these translations was adopted here by the A. V., but it may safely be set aside as incorrect. If the 'things hoped for' have their 'substance' in faith, they are reduced to a subjective illusion. This objection does not lie against the translation in the margin, 'the giving substance to,' if we can explain this to mean that faith makes the intangible future a present reality to us. This represents precisely a leading thought of the author in his conception of faith; the world to come is made by faith a present possession. It is not clear, however, that the phrase will bear this meaning. The 'things hoped for' have an existence quite apart from faith, and therefore faith does not endow them with reality. We should perhaps have expected some such phrase as that faith gives substance to our hope. It is therefore safest to abide by the translation 'assurance,' which yields the sense that faith gives us certainty of that which lies in the future. The marginal translation, 'test,' in the second clause is probably inapplicable in point of fact. 'Proving' may be correct; the clause would then mean that faith demonstrates the unseen realities. But, if linguistically defensible, 'conviction,' that is, the result of demonstration, would be better. Some deny that the word has this meaning, but many excellent scholars interpret it so here. It is further to be noticed that faith which has to do with the future and the unseen is something very different from faith in the specific sense in which Paul uses it—that act of personal trust in Christ by which a man is united to him, and therefore justified and renewed. It is directed

proving of things not seen. For therein the elders had 2
witness borne to them. By faith we understand that the 3
worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that
what is seen hath not been made out of things which do
appear. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent 4
sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne
to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in
respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet

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towards the future inheritance, which is as yet invisible, and gives us a confident assurance of its reality. It is the inward certainty that what we hope for has a real existence; it is a demonstration that the invisible world is no mere fancy.

2. This verse suggests the method the author intends to follow in the development of his theme. 'The elders' are those who are subsequently to be mentioned, the faithful of the Old Covenant down to the time of the Maccabees. To these, on account of their faith, a good witness is borne in Scripture. The position assigned to them is, indeed, somewhat anomalous. They live under all the limitations of the O. T. religion, yet testimony is borne to them, and they seem to transcend these limitations in their experience. We are scarcely prepared, in fact, by the author's previous argument for the level on which, in this chapter, he sets their religious life. Perhaps he saw in their faith a power which brought them into relation with God, it may be by giving the death of Christ a retrospective action.

3. Before he comes to the O.T. examples of faith he speaks of the assurance it gives us that God is the Creator, and that 'the worlds,' literally 'ages' (marg. i. 2), which have been made, were not formed out of things which appear. This is not an assertion of creation out of nothing, but a denial of creation from the phenomenal. There may be a reference to the Platonic doctrine of ideas. Faith is the faculty which goes behind the phenomena and discerns their immaterial source (cf. Rom. i. 20). The author begins with creation, because its history precedes that of the examples of faith which he intends to mention.

4. The author does not say in what respect Abel's sacrifice was 'more excellent' than Cain's. The word properly means 'more abundant,' and there may be a reference to the fact that Abel brought the firstlings and of the fat, while Cain is simply said to have brought of the fruits of the earth. The LXX, however, suggests that Cain's offering was rejected on the ground of ritual inaccuracy: 'If thou offerest rightly, but dost not rightly divide, dost thou not sin?' But 'divide' scarcely suits the vegetable offering,

5 speaketh. By faith Enoch was translated that he should
not see death; and he was not found, because God
translated him: for before his translation he hath had
witness borne to him that he had been well-pleasing unto
6 God: and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing
unto him: for he that cometh to God must believe that
he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that seek after

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and perhaps the LXX meant something different. Probably we should retain 'more excellent,' and it is most natural, from the author's point of view, to find the superiority of Abel's offering in the fact that it was a blood-sacrifice. This may explain why the offering is said to have been made 'by faith.' 'Faith' is here more than a conviction of God's existence and reward of those who seek Him, for the fact that Cain sacrificed at all should suffice to prove that he possessed this degree of faith. If the writer thought that Abel had laid hold of the principle that a sacrifice, to be of the highest efficacy, involved the shedding of blood, he may have seen in this an example of spiritual insight, which closely corresponds to one element of faith, all the more since at this time no law of sacrifice had been given. There may be an allusion to the readers' need of a similar faith, to discern how much more excellent than the blood of animal victims is the blood of Christ. 'Witness' was 'borne to him' in the words of Scripture (Gen. iv. 4). In virtue of his faith 'he being dead yet speaketh,' the reference being to the words: 'The voice of thy brother's blood calleth to me from the ground' (cf. xii. 24). It was a widely-spread view that blood that fell on the ground cried for vengeance. Hence death was often inflicted without bloodshed, or, when blood was spilt, precautions were taken against its falling on the ground. The author probably wished to bring out that faith triumphs over death and guarantees immortality, thus preparing the way for his next example. For 'in respect of his gifts' the margin gives 'over his gifts.'

5, 6. It is not quite clear in what way the translation of Enoch was due to his faith. No general idea of faith suffices here, for of the countless number of the faithful only two are said to have been translated. We may interpret the writer's thought in this way. If faith is that quality which, in a sense, can translate us while living in this world into the next—though for the full realization of this we have to pass through death—why should it not, in an exceptional case, be strong enough to effect actual translation without the experience of death at all? The O. T. did not refer Enoch's translation to faith, but the writer infers

him. By faith Noah, being warned *of God* concerning 7
things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared
an ark to the saving of his house; through which he
condemned the world, and became heir of the righteous-
ness which is according to faith. By faith Abraham, 8
when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which

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it from the fact that he pleased God (so the LXX renders, 'he walked with God'), and that faith was necessary for this. The Hebrew phrase would have suited his argument even better. To Enoch's case the writer applies the general principle that faith is necessary if we are to please God. If we come to Him we must believe that He really is (corresponds to 'the conviction of things not seen,' verse 1), and that 'He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him' (corresponds to 'the assurance of *things* hoped for'). The servile worship of a Being conceived as bad would not be regarded by the author as 'faith.'

7. The case of Noah is an example of faith as directed to the unseen future, with the special thought of salvation from future peril, which rested on a conviction of God's retributive justice, in reward and punishment, by which he condemned the world, which lived careless of such a thought. The meaning can hardly be, as some think, that by preparing an ark for his own house merely, he doomed the rest of the world to destruction. It is also possible to explain 'by which' as by the ark, but since this was the embodiment of his faith, there is no practical difference between the two interpretations. By his action Noah gained a 'righteousness' matching his 'faith.' The phrase does not mean the same as Paul's 'righteousness of faith,' since 'faith' bears in the two writers so different a meaning, and is not in this Epistle said to be imputed for righteousness, while righteousness is not viewed as the direct outcome of faith. This verse suggests to the readers how a fast hold on faith may save them from destruction to which the unbelieving world is condemned.

xi. 8–12. *The faith of Abraham and Sarah.* The faith of Abraham shewn in abandoning his home for an unknown land, and refusing to find in Canaan the fulfilment of his hope. The faith of Sarah shewn in the birth of Isaac.

8. Abraham receives a special prominence because he was so eminently a man of faith, while his career presented a parallel to the circumstances of the readers, and a pattern for their conduct. They have received the call to go forth out of Judaism and break decisively with their past. They are strangers and pilgrims in a land not their own, heirs of the same promise, looking for the

he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out,
9 not knowing whither he went. By faith he became
a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a *land* not his
own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs
10 with him of the same promise: for he looked for the
city which hath the foundations, whose builder and
11 maker is God. By faith even Sarah herself received
power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she

City of God. They are called upon to make a great surrender. Abraham exhibited his faith in obedience to the Divine call. He surrendered the certainties of home and kindred for the uncertainties of wandering and life among strangers, and even for ignorance of the goal to which he was bound. And he did this because he had received the Divine promise and utterly trusted the faithfulness of God.

9, 10. In 'the land of promise' itself he was a 'sojourner,' 'dwelling in tents' (marg. 'having taken up his abode in tents') like the nomad, with no settled abode, and this for no brief period, but right on into the lifetime of Jacob. The thought is not quite clear, but the author seems to mean that by faith Abraham perceived that Canaan, 'land of promise' though it was, was not the permanent abode which God intended for him. And so he patiently waited God's time, dwelling in tents and seeking to found no city; for the city Divinely promised must be worthy of God, and therefore planned and built by Him, with immovable and eternal foundations. Earth had no such city to shew; 'tents' were the fit shelter in its transitory pilgrimage. The city he sought is the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. iv. 26; Rev. xxi. 2, 14, 19), and the triumph of his faith consists in this, that he made no attempt to regard even 'the land of promise' as his own land and permanent abode, but looked beyond it to heaven, which is alone our fatherland (verse 14) and 'the heart's true home.' For 'builder' the margin gives 'architect.'

11. Sarah stands in the narrative of Genesis as an example of incredulity, and it is therefore surprising to find her held up as a pattern of faith. The translation 'to conceive seed' is also very dubious, the term being inapplicable to the female. We might explain that she received power with reference to Abraham's act. It would probably be safer to translate 'to found a posterity.' Some make Abraham the subject of the sentence, translating, with slightly altered Greek, 'he received power for Sarah herself, to beget offspring.' The difficulty of the present text makes Dr. Field's conjecture, that the words 'and Sarah herself' were originally

counted him faithful who had promised: wherefore also 12
there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, *so many*
as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand,
which is by the sea shore, innumerable.

These all died in faith, not having received the 13
promises, but having seen them and greeted them from
afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and

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a marginal note, incorporated in the text by mistake, very tempting. The whole passage would then read more naturally, for since it is of Abraham that verse 12 speaks, the reference to Sarah dislocates somewhat the progress of thought. If it is eliminated, Abraham alone is quoted as an example of faith. If the words are retained, 'even Sarah herself' probably means Sarah, in spite of her earlier unbelief.

12. So great is the power of faith that from a single individual, dead for this purpose (Rom. iv. 19), had sprung an innumerable posterity (Gen. xxii. 17, xv. 5). Faith thus brings life out of death.

xi. 13–16. *Faith demands what earth cannot give.* The patriarchs died in faith without receiving the promises, for faith assured them that earth could not yield the fatherland they were seeking, and God rewarded their assurance of a heavenly country by preparing for them a city.

Not only did the patriarchs live in faith, but they died 'in accordance with' it; in other words, they held fast to faith, in spite of the fact that they died with the promise still unfulfilled, having, indeed, recognized that fulfilment on earth was not to be looked for. They had gladly saluted the promises from afar, and in the strength of this conviction that, far off though they were, they would ultimately be fulfilled, they dwelt on earth as in a foreign land. And by their very confession that they were 'strangers and pilgrims' (Gen. xxiii. 4, xlvii. 9) they made it clear that they sought a 'fatherland.' This could not be the native land, from which they had come, for then they would have returned to it. Nor could it be the land of promise, in which they spoke of themselves as 'strangers,' and in which they had no settled abode. Therefore it must have been for 'a fatherland' beyond the earth, a 'heavenly' country, that they were seeking. And since they thus confessed their heavenly origin, and were content with heaven alone as their permanent home, God did not disdain to own Himself their God, and rewarded their magnificent faith by 'a city' worthy of it.

13. not having received the promises. They had not received the fulfilment of them. The same word is used in verse 39 for

14 pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things
make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of
15 their own. And if indeed they had been mindful of that
country from which they went out, they would have had
16 opportunity to return. But now they desire a better
country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not
ashamed of them, to be called their God: for he hath
prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea,

'received,' while in verse 17 another word is used, and in vi. 15, xi. 33, yet another.

14. such things. That is, that they are 'strangers and pilgrims.'

16. to be called their God. It is questionable whether von Soden is right in thinking that the thought is here suggested that, because God calls Himself 'their God,' they are not dead, and thus that faith is once more shewn as triumphing over death. This thought is expressed in Mark xii. 26, 27, and deduced from this self-designation. It is also true that in the cases of Abel, Enoch, Abraham (in the birth of Isaac), Isaac (in the delivery from death), and in some others, this thought is prominent, but it is not so here, and had the author intended it he would probably have made it explicit.

xi. 17–22. *The faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.* The faith of Abraham further shewn in the sacrifice of Isaac, on whose life the promises hung; the faith of Isaac in the blessing of his sons; the faith of Jacob in the blessing of Joseph's son, the faith of Joseph in his prediction of the Exodus and command that his bones should be buried in Canaan.

17–19. The author now sets forth the supreme trial of Abraham's faith. It had triumphed over physical senility, and over long delay, and now he was summoned to do something which would nullify, as it seemed, the fulfilment of the promises. These promises, which he had welcomed so eagerly, all gathered about Isaac, and in him all hopes of their realization centred. But though Isaac was to him as good as dead, since he meant at all risks to obey the command of God, yet he would not believe that the Divine promise could be stultified by the Divine command. Assured of the faithfulness of God, which could not suffer His purpose to be frustrated or His promise to fail, he rose in faith above death itself, believing that God was strong enough to rescue the heir of the promises from the grip of death.

17. offered up: *lit.* 'hath offered up' (marg.).

he that had gladly received the promises was offering up
his only begotten *son*; *even he* to whom it was said, In 18
Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God *is* 19
able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he
did also in a parable receive him back. By faith Isaac 20
blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come.
By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed each of 21

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his only begotten son. Not that the author has forgotten Ishmael, but because 'in Isaac' alone was Abraham's seed to be called, and he alone was the child of promise.

18. The quotation is from Gen. xxi. 12, where Ishmael is excluded. For 'to whom' the margin gives 'of whom.'

19. from whence he did also in a parable receive him back. It is generally agreed that the reference is to Isaac's deliverance from impending death. Since he did not actually die, but was only in imminent danger, the author adds 'in a figure,' to imply that his father did not literally so receive him back. Westcott adopts a view, which had found very few supporters, that the reference is to the birth of Isaac, translating 'whence he also in a figure received him.' The reference in 'from the dead' is then explained by verse 12. But the immediate impression of the passage and the context seems to negative this view. The word translated 'from whence' means everywhere else in the Epistle 'wherefore,' and several so interpret it here; the meaning would then be that on account of his faith he received him back. The decision is difficult, but the R. V. translation seems the more natural. 'In a parable' may contain an allusion to the deliverance of Isaac as a parable of Christ's resurrection. There are other translations which need not be discussed.

20–22. The three cases now quoted are alike in this, that each happened in view of approaching death, and faith was exhibited in confident prophecy of the future.

20. Gen. xxvii. Although at first Isaac blessed Jacob unwittingly, he confirmed his action afterwards, recognizing the overruling Providence of God. The blessing of Esau touched especially the latter portion of Edom's history, and thus related to the distant future, when its servitude to Israel should be past.

21. Gen. xlviii. Faith revealed to Jacob the high destiny of Joseph's sons, so that he gave them his blessing, thus equalizing them with his own sons; and by the insight of faith he guided his hands wittingly, recognizing the precedence of Ephraim, which history was to confirm.

the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the
22 top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh,
made mention of the departure of the children of Israel;
23 and gave commandment concerning his bones. By faith
Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his
parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and
24 they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By
faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called

worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. This incident occurred rather earlier (Gen. xlvii. 29–31) than the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh. In prospect of death, Jacob causes Joseph to swear that he will bury him in the burying-place of his fathers. The order is probably inverted to bring the two blessings, with the reversal of the natural order, together, and similarly to connect Jacob's plea to be buried in Canaan with Joseph's command that his bones should be taken by the Israelites when they left Egypt. The Hebrew means 'and Israel bowed himself on the bed's head.' The word translated 'bed' was taken by the LXX, followed by this Epistle, to mean 'staff,' the two words being the same when written without vowel-points (*mittah*, 'bed,' *matteh*, 'staff'). The R. V. gives the sense of the Greek.

22. Gen. l. 24, 25; cf. Exod. xiii. 19; Joshua xxiv. 32. Joseph's faith was shewn in his certainty that the Israelites would be delivered from Egypt, and most strikingly in his claim that they should take his bones to rest in the Promised Land.

xi. 23–28. *The faith of Moses and his parents.* The faith of the parents of Moses shewn in the concealment of their son, in defiance of the king's command. Moses' faith in renouncing his position at Pharaoh's court and casting in his lot with the oppressed people of God. His faith in forsaking Egypt. His faith in instituting the passover.

23. Exod. ii. 1, 2. The faith of Moses' parents was displayed in two forms. They had the insight to see in his beauty a sign of a destiny Divinely reserved for him, and they had the heroic courage to disregard the law of death.

24–27. The qualities of insight and courage, which were manifest in the faith of his parents, were shewn in the faith of Moses in a higher form. First there was a great act of renunciation of high position and brilliant career. He deliberately chose to throw in his lot with his people, and surrender all the splendour of Egypt and the prospects it offered him. To this act of patriotic devotion and self-renouncing love he was prompted by faith. It needed no common insight to see in Israel, groaning

the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to be 25
evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the
pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of 26
Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he

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under cruel taskwork—a horde of brutalized slaves, as it must have been—'the people of God.' This fact and the tie of blood imposed on Moses his duty, to place his life at their service. And when the higher road opened up before him, to walk the lower, even if it were in statesmanship or war for Egypt, was only a refined form of 'sin.' He had faith to see that it was 'sin,' and further, that its 'pleasures' could not last. He saw, too, that to bear the ignominious lot of his people involved a principle, which received its highest exemplification in 'the reproach of Christ.' In this he realized that he possessed a treasure richer than all those of Egypt, for he looked to the 'recompense,' that is, the heavenly 'reward.' Following this renunciation came his plunge into action, the slaying of the Egyptian, in consequence of which 'he forsook Egypt.' Here the criticism might be urged that Moses' faith had failed him. The author chooses this stage in his career for the express purpose of rebutting such a charge. On enthusiastic renunciation there had followed bitter disillusion. The people, for whom he had surrendered all, proved unworthy. But he rose above disappointment, and had faith to see that God's time had not come. The strain of waiting and inaction had to be borne, the inner life must be deepened in meditation and seclusion, till self-confidence had passed into diffidence, and God Himself bade him take up the great task. During this long period it was the vision of God which steadied and strengthened him.

24. refused. The word implies deliberate rejection of a career which he was free to choose. The statement goes beyond the narrative in Exodus, and rests probably on current Jewish beliefs in the author's time.

25. the pleasures of sin. By this is not meant vicious self-indulgence, but those higher 'pleasures' of brilliant career and scope for his genius, innocent in themselves, but 'sin' for him, since duty imperiously called him to another service. Faith shewed him that such pleasures were but 'for a season,' and could therefore give no permanent satisfaction.

26. the reproach of Christ: marg. 'the Christ.' The author seems to mean that Moses looked upon the lot he had chosen as an endurance of 'the Messiah's reproach,' consciously borne in his cause, just as Christians have to bear it. The reproach which rests on the Captain of Salvation rests of necessity on his followers, and if they go to him outside the camp they must bear

27 looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he

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his reproach (xiii. 13), the cross which he suffered, despising its shame (xii. 2). In his great army the saints of the Old Covenant have their place. Looking at the matter from a more purely historical point of view, we may see in the sacrifice made by Moses the same principle exemplified, which found its perfect expression in the cross of Christ. For the joy of redeeming Israel from Egyptian bondage Moses dared to make a great refusal and to despise its infamy.

he looked unto the recompense. Probably the author means that in his choice Moses was determined by thought of the heavenly reward, the things hoped for and unseen. It is striking that such a doctrine of the future life plays no part in the early religion of Israel, and the action of Moses stands out on this account as the more conspicuously disinterested.

27. This is referred by some to the flight into Midian after the murder of the Egyptian; by others to the Exodus. In favour of the latter may be urged the fact that Moses is said on the former occasion to have feared (Exod. ii. 14), and, later, to have fled from the face of Pharaoh (verse 15). Everything else is against it. There would be an inversion of the historical order of the passover and the Exodus; 'forsook' is much less appropriate to his leaving at the head of a great host than to the act of an individual fugitive, nor was the actual Exodus in defiance of the king's wrath, but at his urgent request (Exod. xii. 31). The last words of the verse are also more appropriate to the flight, but the words 'not fearing the wrath of the king' really favour this view; although the similar words in verse 23 somewhat diminish their significance, yet the addition of these words is striking. So far from their insertion being due to the author's forgetfulness of Exod. ii. 14, as de Wette strangely supposes, it is due to the fact that he remembered them, and felt that they constituted a challenge. Here, at any rate, it might be said the faith of Moses gave way. No, the author replies, his flight was due to his faith, and not to fear of the wrath of the king. It must be observed that the narrative does not assert that Moses fled because he feared the king's wrath, and the author probably felt warranted by this in his assertion. It is not necessary to ask how he explained the fear which Moses displayed; all that is necessary is to see that the words constitute an argument for rather than against the reference to the flight. Moses had faith to interpret the swift collapse of his hopes and the rejection by his people as God's sign that the time was not yet ripe. And so 'he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king,' because his gaze was fixed on a higher

endured, as seeing him who is invisible. By faith he 28
kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that
the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them.
By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry 29
land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed
up. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they 30
had been compassed about for seven days. By faith 31
Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were

King, who held life and death more firmly in His hand. He rose above the realm of sight, and his steadfast courage grew strong in contemplation of the unseen. For the courage to abandon work on which the whole heart is set, and accept inaction cheerfully as the will of God, is of the rarest and highest kind, and can be created and sustained only by the clearest spiritual vision. Von Soden's view, that the phrase 'forsook Egypt' is a compendious expression for the whole history from the revelation in Midian to the departure of Israel from Egypt, and that 'seeing him who is invisible' refers to the burning bush, is open to some of the difficulties mentioned and creates others of its own.

28. Here faith saves once more from death. 'He kept the passover' (*lit.* 'hath made,' marg. 'instituted') (Exod. xii), as a memorial feast, and the firstborn of Israel were saved from the destroying angel by the 'sprinkling of the blood' on the doorposts and the lintel. The 'faith' was shewn by belief in the impending peril and by acceptance of the appointed means of salvation.

xi. 29–31. *The Red Sea, Jericho, and Rahab.* Faith exemplified in the passage of the Red Sea, the downfall of the walls of Jericho, and the preservation of Rahab.

29, 30. These verses give examples of the wonder-working power of faith. The Israelites made trial of the sea, and a way through it 'on dry land' opened up to them, the Egyptians 'made trial' of this dry land, and to them it became sea. So faith brought about the downfall of the 'walls of Jericho,' for in obedience to the command of God Israel went round them seven days, and they fell without assault (Joshua vi. 1–20).

31. Joshua vi. 17, 22–25. Rahab hid and preserved the Hebrew spies, confessing that Yahweh was God in heaven above and on earth beneath, and that he had given Canaan to the Israelites (Joshua ii). The inhabitants of Jericho were 'disobedient' because, unlike Rahab, they did not submit to Israel, though they knew its wonderful history (Joshua ii. 9–11).

32 disobedient, having received the spies with peace. And
what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell
of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and
33 Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued
kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises,
34 stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire,
escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made
strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of
35 aliens. Women received their dead by a resurrection:

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xi. 32-40. *Later heroes of faith.* By faith many performed great exploits and displayed heroic fortitude. Yet though witness was thus borne to them, they did not receive the promises, that their perfection might not anticipate ours.

32. The examples of faith which follow fall into two classes: by faith men performed great deeds of heroism, and by faith they endured the severest persecution. The author begins with the names of four of the judges, 'Gideon' (Judges vi–viii), 'Barak' (Judges iv, v), 'Samson' (Judges xiii–xvi), and 'Jephthah' (Judges xi, xii). 'David' is next mentioned, as the warrior-king, who crowned the long line of Israel's early heroes. All these were conspicuous examples of faith, since by it they were able to achieve their great victories. 'Samuel' marks the transition to 'the prophets,' since he was judge and prophet in one.

33. subdued kingdoms. The reference is general, but the conquests of Joshua and David, perhaps also of the Maccabees, may be specially in the author's mind. The phrase 'wrought righteousness' is very general, and found many exemplifications in the history of Israel. It may include acts of civil judgement, but also probably exploits on behalf of Israel (cf. 'the righteous acts of the Lord,' Judges v. 11). 'Obtained promises' is also applicable to many, but at least the reference cannot be to the 'promises' mentioned in verses 13 and 39.

stopped the mouths of lions: the reference is clearly to Daniel (Dan. vi), not to Samson or David.

34. quenched the power of fire: this refers to the three Hebrew children (Dan. iii). 'Escaped the edge of the sword' in numerous instances. 'Out of weakness were made strong': Samson may be specially in his mind, but in this, and still more in the two following clauses, the triumphs of the Maccabæan campaigns are probably chiefly in view.

35. Women received their dead: the widows of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 8-24) and the Shunammite (2 Kings iv. 18-37).

and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance ;
that they might obtain a better resurrection : and others 36
had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of
bonds and imprisonment : they were stoned, they were 37
sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with
the sword : they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins ;

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were tortured : marg. 'beaten to death.' 'Were broken on the wheel' is the literal meaning. The reference is to the narrative in 2 Macc. vi. 18–31, where we read of Eleazar, who at the age of ninety was tortured, and to chap. vii, which narrates the horrible martyrdom of the seven brethren and their mother. The words 'not accepting their deliverance' (literally 'the redemption,' marg.) may be illustrated from both narratives, and 'that they might obtain a better resurrection' from the second (vii. 9, 11, 14, 29, 36). This 'better resurrection' to eternal life is contrasted with that mentioned in the former part of the verse.

36. mockings and scourgings. The phrase is best illustrated from the narratives of Eleazar and the seven brethren.

bonds and imprisonment. Another phrase with several examples, perhaps Jeremiah was specially in the author's mind.

37. stoned : as Jeremiah is said to have been, so also Zechariah (2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21). Isaiah is said in tradition to have been 'sawn asunder' in the reign of Manasseh ; the silence of Kings is strong negative evidence against the story.

they were tempted. If this is retained, the reference must be to the temptations to apostasy such as we find in the story of the seventh brother (2 Macc. vii. 24, 25). It cannot be denied that temptation comes strangely among physical tortures. Some have conjectured 'were burned,' which gives an excellent sense, and is very similar in Greek. The allusion might then be to burnings of Jews, such as are recorded in 2 Macc. vi. 11. But this word is so like the word for 'were sawn asunder' that Dr. Field may be right in thinking that 'no good writer would have brought two words hardly distinguishable in sound . . . into juxtaposition,' and that the word may have originated in a marginal gloss on 'had trial,' and by mistake been taken into the text. It is omitted in the Syriac.

slain with the sword : as the prophets in the time of Ahab (1 Kings xix. 14), and later Uriah in the time of Jehoiakim (Jer. xxvi. 20–23).

they went about. The writer passes on to describe their unsettled, homeless, fugitive life. For 'sheepskins' cf. 1 Kings xix. 13, 19 ; 2 Kings i. 8, ii. 8, 13, 14 ; Zech. xiii. 4.

38 being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated (of whom the
world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and moun-
39 tains and caves, and the holes of the earth. And these
all, having had witness borne to them through their faith,
40 received not the promise, God having provided some
better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should
not be made perfect.

12 Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about

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being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated. In these words and in verse 38 the Maccabæan persecutions are probably referred to, when the faithful Jews were driven into the deserts and the 'mountains,' and were compelled to take refuge in 'caves' and 'holes of the earth' (1 Macc. ii. 28-31; 2 Macc. v. 27; vi. 11, x. 6).

38. (of whom the world was not worthy). This is probably the meaning, though the words might mean that they were more precious than the whole world.

39, 40. All of these heroes of faith had testimony borne to them (cf. verse 2), but in spite of this they did not receive the promise. This has been said already of the patriarchs (verse 13); now it is extended to all the faithful of the Old Covenant. That they could not have received it is clear from the whole preceding argument of the Epistle. The author boldly admits that their faith did not receive its reward. But instead of arguing, faith is of no value since it gives nothing more substantial than a certificate of character, he argues, hold fast to your faith; they have been kept waiting for your sake, they shall not receive their full salvation before you. Faith will bring them the reward, which is only deferred, so faith will secure yours, and with very brief delay (x. 37). 'The promise' is that of the blessings of the Messianic salvation in the better country (verse 16).

40. provided: marg. 'foreseen.'

some better thing. We do not receive a better salvation than the faithful of the Old Covenant, but our case is better, since our period of waiting is so brief, and since we live after the great work of redemption has been achieved.

apart from us need not necessarily mean to our exclusion, as if their attainment of salvation at an earlier period would have prevented ours. What is meant is that all believers are to 'be made perfect' at the same time.

xii. 1-13. *Suffering: its joy and discipline.* Let us, surrounded by these champions, run our race patiently, looking to Jesus, the

with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run

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supreme example of faith and unshrinking endurance. The readers have not been willing to suffer, for they have forgotten that the Father of spirits thus attests their legitimate sonship. His chastening is for their good, therefore they should strengthen those who are discouraged by it, removing needless obstacles from their path.

From the glorious examples enumerated in the preceding chapter the author draws the practical moral that his readers should prove themselves worthy of these earlier heroes of faith. They still stand in dense throngs round the arena in which they ran their race, and the thought of their noble endurance should nerve their successors to run with patience. For they have need of patience (x. 36), since the race is longer than they had thought, and the temptations to turn aside more and more urgent.

witnesses: the Greek word is the same as our 'martyrs,' but it has not this specialized sense here. They have borne their testimony to the power of faith. That they are spectators is not expressed by the word, but it is present in the general thought of the verse. Yet the thought does not seem to be that they feel a keen anxiety for our perseverance, as if their salvation depended on it. It is true that they, apart from us, are not made perfect, but in 'us' those are not included who cease to run. The witnesses are keenly concerned for our sake, not for their own, though memory of their own conflict may deepen the intensity of their interest and suspense. The main thought is that we should be encouraged and stimulated by their example. By 'cloud' is meant that they stand in close array, hardly so much that heaven is filled with them as that they crowd the rising tiers of seats around the course.

every weight: marg. 'all cumbrance.' The word is used of the superfluous flesh which an athlete had to reduce by training. This suits the metaphor of a race. The Christian must put himself under strict moral discipline to bring himself into fit condition for running his race; cf. 1 Cor. ix. 24–27. At the same time the thought here seems to be less of the period of training than of the preparation just before the race, in which case the metaphor is rather that of stripping away all cumbrous clothing, and the idea is that of getting rid of every hindrance to the Christian life.

the sin which doth so easily beset us: marg. 'doth closely cling to us' or 'is admired of many.' Unfortunately this translation suggests to most readers the thought of what we call a besetting sin. But the phrase certainly does not mean that special form of sin to which we are most likely to yield. It is 'sin' in general that is meant. The words 'which doth so easily beset us'

2 with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto
Jesus the author and perfecter of *our* faith, who for the
joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising
shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the
3 throne of God. For consider him that hath endured
such gainsaying of sinners against themselves, that ye
4 wax not weary, fainting in your souls. Ye have not yet

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translate one Greek word, which occurs nowhere else and is of very uncertain meaning. There are several possible translations, such as 'easily avoided,' 'much admired' or 'popular,' 'close clinging.' While the second of these is suggested by the form of the word, it does not yield a very good sense, and the first gives a meaning quite inapplicable. The last yields an excellent sense in the context. Sin clings about the runner of the heavenly race like a long, close-fitting robe, impeding his every movement or even tripping him up.

2. While not unconscious of these witnesses they must 'look away' from everything else and fix their eyes on 'the leader and perfecter of faith, Jesus.' He is the great example of faith, who also exhibits it perfectly. The faith even of the O. T. saints pales in comparison with his. For 'author' the margin gives 'captain'; see ii. 10. *Our* should be omitted; it unduly limits the thought. Like Jesus the readers had also a painful cross to endure and a bitter shame to despise. His example should hearten them, and like him they should keep the joyful goal steadily in view. For him the 'joy' is not that of selfish happiness, for there is no self-seeking in him. His position at God's right hand is precious, not for its dignity but for its possibilities in the saving of men. We might also translate 'instead of the joy,' in which case the meaning will be that Jesus chose the life of earth, which culminated in the shame and agony of the cross, instead of the joy of unbroken life in heaven (cf. Phil. ii. 6–9).

3. The spectacle of Jesus enduring the contradiction of sinners should animate their flagging energies. The reading in the text **against themselves** is better attested and more difficult, and therefore more likely to be right, than that in the margin 'against himself.' If accepted, we may connect it with 'sinners' in the sense that those who thus contradicted really sinned against themselves, or with 'gainsaying,' perhaps with the thought that they contradicted the better self. The reading 'against himself' is easy, but seems to add little to the thought.

4. This passage is usually explained to mean that they have not resisted to the point of suffering death by martyrdom. Several

resisted unto blood, striving against sin: and ye have 5
forgotten the exhortation, which reasoneth with you as
with sons,

My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,
Nor faint when thou art reproved of him;
For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, 6
And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with 7

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infer from this that the Epistle cannot have been sent to any church in which martyrdoms had at any time occurred. This would exclude Jerusalem, and Rome after the Neronian persecution. Others argue that the statement is intended to apply only to the present generation of readers. Even so, it would be difficult to reconcile this with the Jerusalem destination, since James, the Lord's brother, had been shortly before put to death. But it is very questionable if this interpretation is correct. The words 'striving against sin' strongly suggest that the meaning is that they have not yet resisted sin in deadly earnest. Blood has not yet been drawn in the conflict. And this is supported by the fact that, as we see from verse 5, the author is blaming them. Could he have blamed them because they have not yet suffered martyrdom? That the metaphor is not elsewhere found cannot decide against the claims of exegesis. It was naturally suggested by the reference to the contests in the arena. That the struggle with sin for them, as for Christ, meant suffering is true; and they have winced under a little pain and flinched from carrying the contest to extremities.

5, 6. But suffering is a token of God's love and a proof of their sonship. They shrink from the conflict since they forget the exhortation of Scripture. It is just because they are sons that they are chastened, and that God does not spare harshness in His discipline. The quotation is from Prov. iii. 11, 12, where the LXX differs somewhat from the Hebrew. The passage is here regarded as spoken by God, who thus addresses the reader as His 'son.' This relation is asserted also at the close of the quotation, though not in the present Hebrew text. A similar passage occurs in the fine peroration to the first speech of Eliphaz (Job v. 17), but it is a moot point, on which side the dependence lies.

5. ye have forgotten. Several translate as a question, 'Have ye forgotten?' but the translation in the text seems preferable.

7. The marginal translation 'endure unto chastening' is less probable, since the next clause is a statement, not a command. The author explains that their suffering is with a view to dis-

you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father
8 chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening,
whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye
9 bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we had the fathers
of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence:
shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the
10 Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few
days chastened *us* as seemed good to them; but he for
11 *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of his holiness. All
chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but

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cipline, and such suffering in no way presents God's action or their relation to Him in an unfavourable light. Every father subjects his son to discipline, and God, if He is their Father, must do the same.

8. If God did not trouble to chasten them, it would be because He did not regard them as His true children, and felt no responsibility for their upbringing. But since God 'scourgeth every son whom he receiveth' (verse 6), it follows that if they are sons they must be chastised. Fatherhood is not weak indulgence but deep concern for the son's highest good. It is possible to understand the verse as a general statement as to human relations: if you were not chastened in your youth, it would be because you were not legitimate children. But this is unlikely, and as addressed to the readers, would be gratuitously offensive.

9. We accepted the chastisement of our natural parents, and much more should we be submissive to God, for He is the **Father of spirits,** whose supreme concern is for the spiritual good of those whom He corrects, and whose discipline, if rightly received, will secure our eternal life. The term 'Father of spirits' is of high importance, suggesting in its comprehensiveness the universal Fatherhood of God. The margin 'our spirits' is not so good.

10. This verse seems to develop the thought contained in 'much rather,' though possibly it is suggested by 'and live.' The earthly parent chastises according to his fallible judgement, and with a view but to a brief period; the heavenly Father's discipline wisely secures our good, and this is a permanent participation in that holiness which is the essence of His moral nature. Thus we prove ourselves His sons in very truth.

11. A further encouragement to patience, based on the fact that, though chastisement while it is being endured cannot be other than painful, it yet afterwards produces a blessed result. This is described as a 'peaceable fruit,' in contrast to the distressful

grievous: yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, *even the fruit* of righteousness. Wherefore lift up the hands that hang 12
down, and the palsied knees; and make straight paths 13
for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed.

Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification 14

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storms through which it has grown to maturity. And this is no other than 'righteousness,' that conformity to the loftiest moral standard which issues out of discipline.

12. Since suffering is thus the proof of sonship and the means of moral progress, they should encourage those who are disheartened by it and brace them to renewed endeavours. The author has in mind Isa. xxxv. 3; Ecclus. xxv. 23. Those who are firm must help the wavering.

13. While they do all they can to restore the flagging energies of the weak, they must see that no unnecessary hindrances strew their way. Some are lame, and if the road be too rough, their limbs may be 'put out of joint,' and they may abandon the Christian race. But if the path be smooth they may find their limbs regain their strength by reason of use, and their lameness pass away. The first clause is taken from Prov. iv. 26. The translation 'turned out of the way' is unobjectionable in itself, but the reference to lameness and being 'healed' suggests that the word has the medical sense 'dislocated' (marg. 'put out of joint'). Whether their state grew worse or better depended on the care exercised in the removal of stumbling-blocks.

xii. 14–17. *The purity of the church.* Let the readers pursue peace and sanctification, and watch over the purity of the church, lest it be compromised by the apostate, the impure, or the unspiritual, remembering how Esau sought in vain the blessing he had flung away.

14. Cf. Ps. xxxiv. 14. The meaning is uncertain. If we translate **with all men,** there is a reference to the maintenance of peace with non-Christians as well as Christians, and the next clause adds a necessary caution that peace is not to be purchased at the price of principle. But throughout the passage the author is dealing with the conditions within the community. It would be better therefore to translate 'with all,' and regard the exhortation as one to peace within the church. If this is closely connected with what has gone before, he may be exhorting that those 'ready to halt' should be treated with forbearing love, not in a harsh or quarrelsome spirit. Probably the critical conditions were leading

15 without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest *there be* any man that falleth short of the grace
of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble
16 *you*, and thereby the many be defiled; lest *there be* any
fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess
17 of meat sold his own birthright. For ye know that even

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to dissension. For 'sanctification' see note on x. 10. The ritual preparation for approach to God has in the New Covenant given place to the cleansing of the conscience from moral defilement, without which the vision of God is in the nature of the case impossible (cf. Matt. v. 8).

15. Not merely must each seek for personal cleansing, but for the purity of the church, which may be disastrously affected by the shortcomings even of a single member. Such a member may be a poisonous root, shooting into malignant growth and sapping the spiritual vitality of the whole community. He may do this by falling short of the grace of God, or falling from it, by unbelief or apostasy, by immorality or lack of spirituality. The passage is partially taken from Deut. xxix. 18, and it is curious that the Greek word translated 'trouble you' is almost identical for the words 'in gall,' which were perhaps the original reading of the LXX. 'Defiled' is the opposite of 'sanctified,' and both terms are drawn from ritual terminology. For 'lest' the margin gives 'whether' (so in verse 16), and 'falleth back from' instead of 'falleth short of.'

16. It is uncertain whether we should take **fornicator** in the spiritual (so Weiss and von Soden) or in the literal sense as in xiii. 4 and elsewhere in N. T. The latter is perhaps the more probable, but we should not connect 'as Esau' with it. The silence of Scripture can, it is true, hardly be pressed against it, for, apart from Jewish legends, Philo explained the hairiness of Esau as lasciviousness. But the context develops only the profanity of Esau. He was a man with no depth of nature and with no outlook into the eternal. He was not a man of faith who postpones present gratification for future good, but one who lived like an animal, 'tame in earth's paddock as her prize,' with no spiritual horizon. He was thus, engaging though he might be, a character of less promise than his selfish, calculating, cold-blooded brother, who had spiritual vision and numbered Bethel and Peniel among his experiences. The contrast comes out in Esau's selling his birthright, and all its spiritual privileges, in a fit of impatient hunger, and Jacob's grim tenacity in holding on to the angel with dislocated thigh, till he blessed him.

17. As the passage is here translated, what Esau sought with

when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected (for he found no place of repentance), though he sought it diligently with tears.

For ye are not come unto *a mount* that might be 18
touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness,

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tears was not 'repentance' but 'the blessing.' The brackets might be removed and 'it' referred to 'repentance,' but this is improbable, for we should have expected the pronoun to refer to 'place,' which the Greek does not admit. There is, in no case, any thought of Esau's future destiny, as if repentance were here a condition of salvation. What is meant is that he found it impossible to avoid the consequences of his irrevocable act. With the birthright he had bartered away his blessing. It was this 'blessing' and not 'repentance' which, according to the moving story in Gen. xxvii. 34–38, Esau sought with tears.

xii. 18–24. *The terrors of the Old Covenant and the glories of the New.* Unlike the Old Covenant, which was sensuous in its character and barred approach to God, the New Covenant is heavenly and brings us to God and the angels, to Jesus and the saintly dead. Two main thoughts are expressed in this magnificent contrast between the two covenants. The Old Covenant was given under sensuous and material forms; the New Covenant is within the sphere of the heavenly and intangible. Once more the Old Covenant took the most effective means for preventing approach to God, for it hedged about His presence with the most awful terrors; the New Covenant has brought us into heaven itself, to the angels and the blessed dead, to God and to Jesus, through whose blood it has been made. All these great privileges must become motives for watchfulness. The New Covenant is a supreme manifestation of God's grace, therefore they must look carefully lest any fall short of it. The passage presents serious difficulties, but these occur for the most part in verses 22, 23.

18. The words 'a mount' are inserted by the Revisers to balance 'mount Zion' in verse 22, and as suggested by verse 20. Yet the more literal translation in the margin, 'a palpable and kindled fire,' is to be preferred. The order of the adjectives is, it is true, strange, and the expression 'a palpable fire' is stranger still. Yet rhetoric has other laws than logic, and an expression is not too daring which heightens the terror by making the subtle flame materialize before our eyes. The mountain is lost in the fire, but imparts to it some of its own solidity. God, who is surrounded at the law-giving by myriads of His holy ones, has made His angels winds and His ministers a flame of fire (contrast verse 22). The O. T. theophanies are consistently of an elemental

19 and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet,
and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard in-
treated that no word more should be spoken unto them:
20 for they could not endure that which was enjoined, If
21 even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned; and
so fearful was the appearance, *that* Moses said, I exceed-
22 ingly fear and quake: but ye are come unto mount Zion,
and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeru-
23 salem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general

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character. Here the author accumulates the appalling manifestations of Sinai (Deut. iv. 11, v. 22; Exod. xix. 16–19).

19. intreated. This request was made after the ten commandments had been spoken (Exod. xx. 18–20; Deut. v. 23–27; cf. 'and he added no more,' verse 22).

20. Loosely quoted from Exod. xix. 12, 13. So great was the sanctity of the mountain that even unconscious trespass must be visited with death. The command brings out well the materialistic conception of holiness which is transmitted by physical contact. Yahweh's presence on the mount makes it holy, and this quality communicates itself to whatever touches it. Hence the mode of death prescribed: no hand must touch the transgressor, that none may be infected with this contagious holiness. The same savage order of ideas is shewn in the setting of bounds round the mountain, which correspond to a taboo line (Exod. xix. 12, 23). For similar materialistic conceptions of holiness cf. the fate of Uzzah (2 Sam. vi. 6, 7), and the law of the sin-offering (Lev. vi. 25–30).

21. In the narrative of the Sinaitic revelation these words do not occur, but Moses in telling the story of the golden calf says, 'And I fear exceedingly on account of the anger and displeasure, for the Lord was provoked against you' (Deut. ix. 19, LXX). The words 'and quake' have no counterpart in any O. T. narrative about Moses, but the same word occurs of Moses at the bush in the speech of Stephen (Acts vii. 32). This suggests that the author may be drawing on Jewish tradition.

22, 23. The earthly Zion crowned by Jerusalem is the material counterpart of the heavenly hill, whereon is the Jerusalem, which is above (Gal. iv. 26). This New Jerusalem, as it is called in the Revelation (iii. 12, xxi. 2), is in truth the eternal ideal city, wherein God Himself dwells and which is the home of angels and saints. When we pass from the city to its inhabitants we are met by grave difficulties. The main question is whether in the words 'to innumerable hosts . . . in heaven' we have angels

assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of

alone referred to, or both angels and men. There are subordinate questions as to the connexion and arrangement of the words. It should be observed that each new class in the enumeration is introduced by 'and.' It is not agreed whether the 'and' which stands before 'church' introduces a new class, as in the margin 'and to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels, and the church,' &c., or whether, as in the R. V., it simply connects 'church' with 'general assembly,' or as it would be better translated 'festal assembly.' In the former case there can be no doubt that men as well as angels are referred to; in the latter either view may be taken. It is possible, however, to arrange the words somewhat differently than in the margin while retaining the same general sense: 'And to innumerable hosts of angels, a festal assembly, and to the church,' &c., but the connexion followed in the text seems more natural. This leaves the question open whether we should identify 'the festal assembly and church of the firstborn' with the 'myriads of angels.' On account of the absence of 'and' before 'a festal assembly,' this is the construction naturally suggested by the passage. The main objection is that the angels are not spoken of elsewhere in Scripture as 'firstborn.' But it was a perfectly appropriate term to use of the 'sons of God' in contrast to men, the later-born members of the city, and that they are 'enrolled' does not necessarily mean that as yet they are not actual residents. The term 'church' (*ekklēsia*) may mean simply 'convocation,' and this admirably suits the angels. It is actually so used in Ps. lxxxix. 5, 'assembly of the holy ones' (cf. verse 7), and in Ps. lxxxii. 1 the LXX translates 'God stood in the congregation (synagogue) of gods.' Further, the reference to men creates serious difficulties. The 'spirits of just men' occur at a later point; is it probable that human beings are twice introduced in this enumeration? This difficulty is met by the plea that, in this case, it is of living Christians that he is speaking. But quite apart from the curious order which thus arises, the description of them as 'church of the firstborn' is hard to account for. More serious still is the consideration that it is the privileges of living Christians that he is here describing; the inhabitants with whom they are privileged to have communion hardly include themselves. It is best, therefore, to translate 'to myriads of angels, *even* a festal assembly and convocation of firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.'

23. to God the Judge of all. We can hardly translate in this way; the order of the Greek necessitates that 'of all' should be attached to 'God.' We may translate 'to the God of all as Judge' or better 'to a Judge *who is* God of all.' It is not easy to see

24 just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of
a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that
25 speaketh better than *that of* Abel. See that ye refuse

what is the precise point of the reference to God as Judge. We may hear in it perhaps a note of warning, such as is struck more loudly in verses 25–29, but probably we should regard it as an assertion that the supreme ruler in the heavenly city is God, who is 'God of all,' angels and men alike. He is therefore our God; our Judge is no alien Power.

the spirits of just men made perfect. He chooses the term 'spirits,' i. e. disembodied spirits (cf. 'spirits in prison,' 1 Pet. iii. 19), because he wishes to insist on the supersensuous character of the inhabitants. This fact tells against the interpretation of the 'firstborn' as those still on earth. It is disputed whether the 'just men' are O. T. saints or those who have fallen asleep in Christ. The phrase probably covers both. They are spoken of as already 'perfected,' but for their final perfection they have still to wait (xi. 40).

24. The writer now adds **Jesus,** who has made this perfecting possible, and has mediated the New Covenant (marg. 'testament') by which we can draw nigh to God. Jesus is the leader of salvation who has opened the way to the heavenly city, in which we may follow him. The word translated 'new' means new in point of time. This is the only place where it is applied to covenant in the N. T. The word generally used means new in kind. The human name 'Jesus' is chosen to remind us of his sympathy and human experience. 'The blood of sprinkling,' whereby the covenant is ratified, speaks a better thing than that of Abel. It is true, as von Soden urges, that no reference is made to the cry of Abel's blood for vengeance in Gen. iv. 10, but it was well understood that blood spilt on the ground cried for vengeance (see note on xi. 4). Nor does it follow because he uses 'better' that the blood of Abel spoke a good thing. It is most natural to understand that, while Abel's blood called for vengeance and sent the murderer from the presence of God with a guilty conscience, to be a fugitive and wanderer on the earth, the blood of Jesus calls for forgiveness, brings even those who have shed it into the presence of God, cleanses their conscience, and gives an abiding home in heaven. The margin gives 'than Abel.'

In these verses the readers are spoken of as having already come to the heavenly Jerusalem and entered into fellowship with its inhabitants. This is their experience from the ideal point of view, though actually the veil still hangs between. But faith can even now carry them within the veil.

xii. 25–29. *The voice from heaven.* Let the readers pay heed to

not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, when they refused him that warned *them* on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, who turn away from him that *warneth* from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but 26
now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing 27
of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may

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God's voice, remembering the fate of disobedient Israel. For heaven and earth will soon be shaken, and only the imperishable, to which our kingdom belongs, will abide. Let us gratefully serve God with awe, for He is a consuming fire.

25. The argument in the impressive warning which follows, is similar to that in ii. 1–4 and x. 28–31. Both at Sinai and in the new revelation it is God who speaks. It is true that the request of the Israelites that God should no longer speak to them sprang out of natural terror at His voice, and God Himself acknowledged, 'they have well said all that they have spoken' (Deut. v. 28). But the writer, in the light of later history, probably saw an ominous forecast of Israel's rebelliousness, which brought upon it the Divine retribution. To us God has spoken from heaven, and this clothes His words with even greater majesty, and demands for treason a still heavier vengeance. For 'that *warneth* from heaven' the margin reads 'that is from heaven.'

26. The shaking of the earth took place at the law-giving (Exod. xix. 18). But, as Haggai prophesied, God is going to shake both earth and heaven (Hag. ii. 6, 21). The prophecy seems to have been spoken in the first instance in anticipation of the overthrow of the Persian kingdom, and the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom under Zerubbabel. The author probably is referring here to the Second Coming, believed to be imminent. It should be remembered that according to the Jewish conception the affairs of earth were closely linked with heaven. Earthly kingdoms have their heavenly guardians or princes, who identify themselves with the interests of their respective realms (Dan. x. 13, 20, 21, xii. 1), hence the overthrow of a kingdom is an act which takes effect not only on earth but in heaven (Isa. xxiv. 21, 22, xxxiv. 4, 5). **Yet once more** indicates that this shaking is to be final.

27. The things which can be shaken are those things that have been made, the manufactured, the material. These just because they are material are stamped with a perishable character, and

28 remain. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be
shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service
29 well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our
God is a consuming fire.

13 2 Let love of the brethren continue. Forget not to
shew love unto strangers: for thereby some have entér-

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will pass away when heaven and earth are shaken. They pass away that the truly real, which cannot perish, may remain, the heavenly and eternal, to which our kingdom (verse 28) belongs. It is also possible to connect the last clause with 'made,' in the sense that these things have been made in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. But this seems less probable.

28. Since our kingdom is untouched by these convulsions of the physical universe, we should be filled with thankfulness, that thus we may render to God that grateful and spontaneous service which is well pleasing to Him. And remembering His awful majesty, we should approach Him with **reverence** (marg. 'godly fear') **and awe.** The margin 'thankfulness' is probably better than 'grace.'

29. Such reverence and awe befit our worship, for He is a consuming fire. It is the stern side of God that is mostly in the writer's thought, for he is checking presumption. But he may be thinking, too, of the function of fire to cleanse and refine.

xiii. 1–6. *Various exhortations.* Let the readers practise brotherly love, hospitality, care for the persecuted, purity, contentment, and freedom from avarice.

The author begins with general exhortations, but returns in the course of them to the main subject of the Epistle.

1. The mutual love of Christians was very characteristic of the early church, and attracted the attention of the heathen. As a result of the strain under which the community was living, the author seems to have detected a cooling of the affection of the members for each other. When the bond of a common faith is relaxed, and enthusiasm dies down, love is in danger of growing cold.

2. Hospitality to their fellow countrymen honourably distinguished the Jews. The early Christians were equally hospitable to their co-religionists; the social conditions of the period made it necessary, but especially so in the case of the Christians who might at any time be rendered homeless and destitute through persecution. This fact might make it in some instances dangerous to shelter fugitives, and those who were losing their attachment to Christ were the less likely to risk their own safety for such as were suffering for his sake. The precept is enforced by

tained angels unawares. Remember them that are in 3
bonds, as bound with them; them that are evil entreated,
as being yourselves also in the body. *Let* marriage *be* had 4
in honour among all, and *let* the bed *be* undefiled: for
fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Be ye free 5
from the love of money; content with such things as ye
have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee,
neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with 6
good courage we say,

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:
What shall man do unto me?

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the reminder that some have thus 'entertained angels unawares.' The references are to the narratives in Gen. xviii—xix (cf. Judges vi. 11–24, xiii. 2–23).

3. It is not merely persecution elsewhere that has driven fugitives to share their hospitality, but there are prisoners for Christ's sake, whom they must succour, entering sympathetically into their position. Others are enduring hardship for Christ, and the readers, as still in the body and liable themselves to be evil entreated, should remember these. 'In the body' cannot mean as members of the body of Christ.

4. There seems to be no reference to any ascetic depreciation of marriage, but only a practical exhortation to chastity alike in the married and unmarried, with the assurance that breaches of this law will be visited by the judgement of God. 'Among all' is perhaps the best translation, but we might translate 'in all respects.'

5. To a typical form of sensual self-indulgence is added a typical form of self-aggrandizement. For this denunciation of the love of money cf. 1 Tim. vi. 10 and the many warnings in the gospels, which make it rest largely, as here, on a distrust of God's watchful Providence. The quotation occurs nowhere in the O. T. in precisely this form, but with the substitution of the third person for the first it occurs substantially as here in Deut. xxxi. 6, 8; 1 Chron. xxviii. 20. In Philo it is found precisely as here; probably it was current in this form in the synagogue or in popular language.

6. The quotation is from Ps. cxviii. 6. Quite possibly verses 5 and 6 had special appropriateness to the circumstances of the readers. In time of persecution they might lose their worldly goods, but the Lord would provide, and while He was their helper the utmost that the violence of man could do to them was in vain.

7 Remember them that had the rule over you, which
spake unto you the word of God; and considering the
8 issue of their life, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ *is* the
9 same yesterday and to-day, *yea* and for ever. Be not

xiii. 7–17. *Avoid novel teachings and break with Judaism.* Let them imitate the faith of their deceased rulers: Jesus is now what he was to them, therefore let them not yield to novel doctrines. The spiritual life should be nourished by grace rather than sacrificial meals, for our altar admits no meal, since its sacrifice is one of those most sacred sin-offerings, whose flesh cannot be eaten by the priests, but must be burned outside the camp. So Jesus had to suffer outside the gate. Let us abandon the camp and join him, bearing his reproach, for our city is not on earth but is still to come. We may offer the sacrifices of praise and beneficence. Let the readers obey the rulers, who are watchful for their interests.

7. They who had the rule over them were those from whom they had received the gospel. Remembering what death they had died, let them imitate the faith which had brought their lives to so glorious an issue. Whether this had been martyrdom is not said. It is clear that the readers were in danger of lapsing from it, and equally clear that the author shared the same theological standpoint as those who first evangelized the readers.

8. This verse is connected with what goes before and with what follows. The argument is: Imitate the faith of your deceased rulers, for Jesus is the same now as he was to them. All then that the argument requires is 'Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and to-day.' But while this is enough for logic it is too little for love, so he adds '*yea* and for ever,' to give expression to the exulting feeling that not for an age but for time and eternity Jesus is unchangeably the same. It is strange that von Soden should regard this fine addition as intolerably dragging. He translates 'Jesus is Christ yesterday and to-day, the same [i. e. Christ] also for ever,' which is neither so fine in itself nor so doubly relevant to the context.

9–12. These verses are among the most difficult in the Epistle and have been very variously explained. The connexion with verse 8 is plain. Since Jesus remains the same now as he was in the time of your late rulers, hold fast the doctrines they taught you, and do not be carried away by novelties of teaching. As he is unchanging, let your doctrine be unchanging too. The **teachings**, against whose seductions the writer warns them, are described as 'divers and strange.' By the former adjective he indicates their varied character, by the latter that they are foreign to the Christianity they have received and hitherto professed.

carried away by divers and strange teachings: for it is

We may infer that several different tendencies, all, it is probable, connected with various sides of Judaism, were present to the author's mind. Of these he selects one, chiefly, perhaps, because it leads naturally to the exhortation he wishes to give in verse 13. The reference to 'meats' has given rise to several conjectures. It is well to remember that the teachings, of which the author speaks, recommend, not abstinence from certain foods but participation in them. The 'heart' was thought to be strengthened by 'meats,' in other words, these helped forward the religious life. We may, therefore, set aside all explanations which treat the teaching as ascetic, or as scrupulously inculcating the unlawfulness of 'unclean' food. It would, however, be possible to think of the opposite tendency represented by 'the strong,' who prided themselves on the enlightenment which permitted them to eat meats offered to idols, or such as were pronounced unclean in the law. Yet this is hardly probable, for it is one thing to express the sense of emancipation in this way, it is another thing to believe that it is a profitable religious exercise. But, apart from this, it is not easy to understand how the following verses are relevant to such a position. They suggest much more strongly that the 'meats' are the sacrificial meals of Judaism. Once more the author returns to the main subject of his letter, asserting again the unprofitable character of Judaism, and the duty of holding fast to Christianity in spite of temptations to abandon it.

It is best to approach the interpretation of verse 10 through an identification of the persons referred to. It seems quite clear that 'we' must mean 'we Christians.' Some have taken it to mean 'we Jews'; it is enough to say that if the writer had meant this, he would have said it. Yet it probably springs out of a correct appreciation of the requirements of the context. 'They which serve the tabernacle' can, however, hardly be other than the Levitical priests. Some have thought them to be Christians. But, once more, if the author had meant this he would surely have expressed himself differently. The first and third persons in the same sentence can hardly refer to the same people, unless this is clearly indicated. The author would simply have said 'we have no right,' or, if he had wished to retain the reference to the tabernacle service, 'we who serve the tabernacle.' But if they are the Levitical priests, an important question arises: Is the author thinking of the priests of contemporary Judaism, or is he calling attention to the disabilities of the priests as defined in the law? It is on the answer to this question that the general view we take of the passage depends. The usual opinion is that he is referring to the Jewish priests of his own time, affirming that we Christians 'have an altar,' of which we have, but those priests

good that the heart be stablished by grace ; not by meats,

have not, a 'right to eat.' But this view is exposed to serious objections. The reference to 'the tabernacle' is difficult. The priests of the first century A. D. served the temple, not the tabernacle; and if in reply it be said that the author always speaks of 'the tabernacle,' that is just one of the reasons for adopting the alternative view here, that he is referring to the regulations of the law. Again, it is curious reasoning to say the heart should not be strengthened with food, and proceed, we Christians have an altar of which we may eat while Jewish priests may not. We expect an argument to the effect that Christians have no sacrificial food to eat. And it should be observed that the eating of verse 10 ought to be taken as literally as the 'meats' of verse 9, otherwise the logical connexion is broken. It is also difficult to see why the priests are singled out. To interpret 'the priests, much less the people' makes sense, it is true, but the reference has little point. Again, the reference to the destruction of the victim's body has little relevance on this interpretation. Lastly, if the author's object was to prove that the Jewish priests had no right to participate in the Christian sacrifice, would he have proved it by the argument that 'Jesus suffered without the gate'? It was not true of the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement that those who were in the camp failed to reap the benefits because the body of the victim was burned outside. Why then should not those who remained within the camp have been able to enjoy the blessings of Christ's sacrifice? It must not be forgotten that the efficacy of the sacrificial act resided not in the slaughter of the victim, still less in the destruction of the body, but in the presentation of the blood. The alternative explanation is that we Christians cannot think of sustaining the heart by sacrificial foods, for the only Christian sacrifice belongs to a type of which the priests were forbidden to eat anything. The victim's body had to be destroyed outside the camp, and thus the body of Jesus was slain outside the gate. It is greatly in favour of this that it yields a coherent argument. The 'not by meats' of verse 9 is supported by the proof that eating can have no place in a Christian sacrifice; it also explains why 'the priests' are mentioned. They could eat the minor sin-offerings in a holy place, but the more important sin-offerings, above all the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, were too holy even for them to eat. The flesh could be safely disposed of only by burning in a clean place outside the camp. On this interpretation, the burning of the victim becomes important in the argument, for it made the eating of the victims not only illegal but impossible. And thus the author would say, Because Jesus is the supreme sin-offering, it is impossible that his body should be eaten in a sacrificial meal. One objection may be urged

wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited.
We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which 10
serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, 11

against this view. It is that we should have expected the author to say, 'we have a sacrifice,' rather than 'we have an altar.' The difficulty is real, but it may be mitigated if we suppose that he shrank from bringing the ideas of 'eating' and of 'Christ's body' into connexion, and thus said 'altar,' and if we remember that they who eat the sacrifices have communion with the altar (1 Cor. x. 18). The question as to what is meant by the 'altar' still remains. It is clear that if the point of the argument is that Christianity knows no sacrificial meal, the 'altar' cannot be 'the table of the Lord.' In Christianity, 'altar' and 'table,' the author would have said, are mutually exclusive terms. The 'altar' is generally taken to be the cross. If the writer meant anything so definite, this may be correct. It should be pointed out that the cross in verse 12 really corresponds not to the altar but to the pyre on which the bodies of the victims were burned. In the case of Jesus, however, there was no such double experience of death at the tabernacle and burning outside the camp, as in that of the victims on the Day of Atonement. But if we ask, What was the altar on this day? the answer must be that it was the mercy-seat. Although, etymologically, the altar (in Hebrew) means the place of slaughter, its idea in the ritual is fulfilled by that to which the blood is applied. According to this, the only Christian altar is in the heavenly sanctuary where Christ ministers.

The general argument of the passage may therefore be thus stated: Do not be carried away by the fascinations of the many teachings with which you will be brought in contact, which are all foreign to the Christianity you have been taught. Such a doctrine is that the heart may be strengthened with sacrificial meals; but it is well for us that it should be strengthened by Divine grace. Not only are sacrificial meals of no profit to those who partake of them, but no place is left for them in Christianity. We have an altar, but it is one with which no meal can be associated, for its sacrifice belongs to that class of most sacred sin-offerings, whose blood was brought into the Holy Place, and the bodies of which could not be eaten even by the priests, but had to be burnt outside the camp. And since the sacrifice of Jesus was of this type, he had to suffer outside the gate in order that he might present his blood in the heavenly sanctuary and thus sanctify his people.

10. which serve the tabernacle. There is a touch of irony in this description of the priests of the Old Covenant.

11. The blood of the more important sin-offerings—those for 'the anointed priest' and 'the whole congregation of Israel'—was

whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned without the camp.
12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people
13 through his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing

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brought into the Holy Place, and the carcases were burned 'without the camp' (Lev. iv. 1–21). With the minor sin-offerings—those for a ruler or one of the common people—the blood was not taken within the Holy Place (Lev. iv. 22–35), and the flesh was eaten by the priests (Lev. vi. 25–29). The rule as to sin-offerings, whose blood is brought into the 'tent of meeting,' is to be found in Lev. vi. 30, but although this verse is referred to here, the writer seems not to have in mind the case of these sin-offerings, but of the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement. For it was only in this that 'the high-priest' officiated, and it is in terms borrowed from the ritual of that day that the work of Christ is generally expressed. We should, perhaps, take 'holy place' to mean Holy of Holies, since the atoning act culminated in the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy-seat. The author's argument would however remain correct in point of fact, if the term bore its usual sense. The passage rather suggests that he may have blended the sin-offerings, whose blood was brought by the priests into the Holy Place, with the victims of the Day of Atonement, whose blood was brought by the high-priest into the Holy of Holies.

12. As already pointed out, the writer has to blend the double experience of the victim in the Jewish sacrifice—slaughter within the camp and burning of the carcase outside of it—into a single experience in the case of Jesus, that of suffering 'without the gate.' The burning of the victim was not intended to sublimate but to get rid of it. The body plays no part in the atoning act, and has in fact no significance after the blood has been drained from it. The life, and therefore the atoning energy, resides in the blood and in the blood alone. On the writer's scheme, then, no function is left for the body of Jesus. It is 'through his own blood' that he must 'sanctify the people.' It is thus inevitable that, while the writer fully recognizes the fact of the Resurrection of Christ (verse 20), he can assign no place to it in his argument or attach to it any theological significance.

without the gate. This is not stated in the gospels, but implied in John xix. 20 ('nigh to the city'). The shifting camp of the wandering had become for the Jews 'an abiding city.'

13, 14. That Jesus **suffered without the gate** was to the author very suggestive. It not only assimilated his sacrifice to that of the Day of Atonement, it was a fit symbol that Jerusalem

his reproach. For we have not here an abiding city, but 14
we seek after *the city* which is to come. Through him 15
then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget 16

---

had thrust him out, by dooming him to the 'reproach' of an outlaw's death, and a death pronounced accursed in the law (Deut. xxi. 23). Henceforth he was homeless on earth. But that system which made him an alien can be no home for his followers: they too must break with Judaism, and bear with him the ignominy of the cross. And we may be well content to be outcasts, homeless as they made him, for it is not on earth that we have 'an abiding city.' On earth there can be no such permanent abode for those whose true home is in the unseen, and who know themselves to be pilgrims and strangers. They know, too, that soon heaven and earth will be shaken, and no material city can survive that convulsion of the universe.

13. without the camp. The variation from 'without the gate' is determined by the circumstances. Since, in the time of Jesus, Israel no longer lived in the camp, the phrase was necessarily changed to 'without the gate.' But his suffering 'without the gate' was the act of the representatives of Judaism, and the physical exclusion from the city was the outward expression of excommunication from the Jewish Church. Since in the law—which for the author is regulative of Judaism considered as a religious system—the camp is the sacred enclosure within which the religious community of Israel dwells, to 'go forth without the camp' means to sever connexion with Judaism. It is difficult to believe that the language of verse 13 could have been addressed to non-Jewish readers.

15. Jesus has offered the great atoning sacrifice, and Christians cannot therefore offer such sacrifices for sin, but they may **offer up a sacrifice of praise to God**; yet even this only through Christ, who by his sin-offering has made access to God possible. Praise should be offered 'continually,' for it can never adequately express the goodness of God, and it should be the constant attitude of our mind towards Him. The spontaneous praise of the heart does not wait for fixed seasons of worship. 'The fruit of lips' is borrowed from the LXX of Hos. xiv. 2. Some ancient authorities omit 'them' (marg.).

16. Christians may offer also the sacrifices of helpful service to their fellows, and especially the giving of their substance to those in need. These 'sacrifices' of praise and beneficence are well pleasing to God.

17 not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey
them that have the rule over you, and submit *to them*:
for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall
give account; that they may do this with joy, and not
with grief: for this *were* unprofitable for you.
18 Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good
19 conscience, desiring to live honestly in all things. And
I exhort *you* the more exceedingly to do this, that I may
be restored to you the sooner.
20 Now the God of peace, who brought again from the

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17. While they must be loyal to the memory of their former rulers (verse 7), they must be loyal to the government of those who rule them now. Not merely should they 'obey' their commands, but 'yield' to their wishes. It is clear from this passage that the author felt himself in full sympathy with the leaders, and that his feeling was not shared by some at least of those to whom he writes. With these he pleads on the ground that their leaders feel a deep responsibility for them to God, and anxiously watch over them, that their care may be constantly a source of joy, as they see it bear fruit, and not of grief (literally 'groaning,' marg.), which will turn to the disadvantage of those who have caused it.

xiii. 18, 19. *Request for prayer.* The writer asks for the prayers of the readers, protesting his integrity, and desiring soon to be restored to them.

18. The change from the plural to the singular in the next verse can hardly be accidental. The writer combines others with himself. These may be the rulers of the church, in which case he reckons himself as one of them, or they may be the Christians who are with him. In any case they are objects of some suspicion to the readers, whom he therefore assures of the good conscience they feel themselves to possess.

19. He is the more desirous of their prayers, in order that he may be restored to them more quickly. The author therefore evidently stood in close relations to the church he is addressing, and may have been one of its leaders. He is kept from them by circumstances of which we have no knowledge. It seems clear from verse 23 that he was not in prison, and the hindrance was only temporary, as in that verse he expresses the definite purpose to see them soon.

dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of
the eternal covenant, *even* our Lord Jesus, make you 21
perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us
that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus
Christ; to whom *be* the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of 22
exhortation: for I have written unto you in few words.

---

xiii. 20, 21. *A prayer for the perfecting of the readers, ending with a doxology.* It is generally assumed that here we have the solitary reference in the Epistle to the resurrection of Christ. The words might be understood of the entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, on which so much stress is laid throughout the Epistle, but taken in themselves they very strongly suggest the reference to the resurrection. For 'with,' literally 'in,' the margin gives 'by.' It is not certain whether the author means that God raised Christ by means of the blood, or whether He brought him up from the dead as Shepherd with the blood. These words may indeed be connected with the whole of the earlier part of the verse. God is called 'the God of peace,' not as healing the strife of the church, but as imparting an inward harmony to the soul in which its conflict has been stilled. The phrase 'the great shepherd of the sheep' rests upon Isa. lxiii. 11, where the LXX reads 'Where is he that brought up from the sea the shepherd of his sheep?' For 'the blood of the eternal covenant' cf. Zech. ix. 11.

21. make you perfect. The word used is not the usual one in the Epistle; it means 'to complete.' This completeness is with a view to our doing the will of God, but this we can do only as He works in us, through Jesus Christ, that which is well pleasing to Him. For the thought we may compare Phil. ii. 12, 13. Instead of 'thing' many ancient authorities read 'work' (marg.), and for 'us' many read 'you' (marg.).

to whom. It is not certain whether God or Christ is meant —doxologies are more usually addressed to God—but 'Jesus Christ' is the immediately preceding person, and in an Epistle whose main object has been to vindicate his supremacy, a closing doxology to him is most fitting.

xiii. 22–25. *Concluding words and salutations.*

22. The author asks them to bear with the exhortation he has felt it his duty to address to them, and urges in support of his plea for their kindly reception of his letter that it is so brief. Clearly he could not count with certainty on a favourable hearing.

23 Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

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23. But he will not trust to the effect of the letter alone. He will soon be with them (cf. Paul's similar hint in Philem. 22), and he will come with Timothy if he joins him soon enough to permit of this. 'Our brother' seems to imply that Timothy was the author's colleague. The article would probably have been used in Greek, if he meant simply fellow Christian. The words 'set at liberty' seem to refer to an imprisonment of Timothy, though they might be interpreted more generally. We know nothing of the circumstances.

24. The command **Salute all them that have the rule over you** is important as shewing that the Epistle is not addressed to the whole community, but to the community apart from its rulers, and, further, the double 'all' suggests that the letter was directed to a single community in a city where several were to be found.

They of Italy. On this see the Introduction, p. 26.

25. This brief benediction is found also in Titus iii. 15; in Col. iv. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 22 the formula is even briefer, 'Grace be with you.'

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